福本伸行

AKAGI Nobuyuki Fukumoto
Kindai Mahjong Comics

第7巻

アカギ

闇に降り立った天才

業火の闘牌

近代麻雀コミックス

Kindai mahjong Comics

アカギ 業火の闘牌 7

福本伸行

TAKE SHOBO

ISBN4-8124-5138-8
C9979 ¥552E
9784812451380
1929979005528
雑誌57594-03 定価580円 本体552円

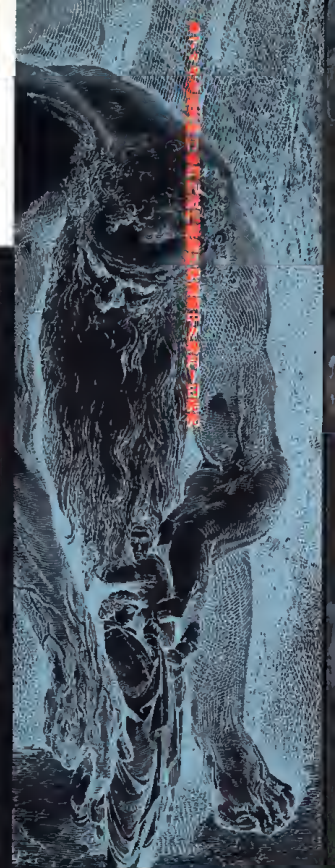
闇に降り立った天才

近代麻雀コミックス 竹書房

福本伸行

アカギ

第7巻



アカギ

福本伸行

AKAGI◉Nobuyuki Fukumoto

Kindai Mahjong Comics

第⑦巻

闇に降り立った天才

業火の闘牌

近代麻雀コミックス◉竹書房

Kindai mahjong Comics

アカギ 業火の闘牌⑦

福本伸行

TAKE SHOBO

アカギ 第⑦巻

闇に降り立った天才

近代麻雀コミックス◉竹書房

福本伸行

近代麻雀コミックス

哲也

第7巻

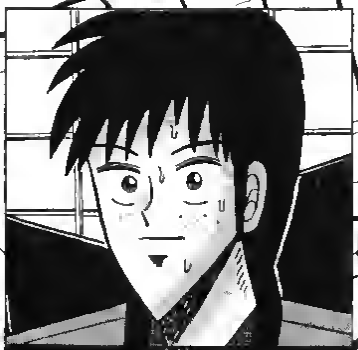
福本伸行

● TAKE SHOBO ●

赤木しげる

ニセアカギ

並外れた記憶力と雀力を持つが、浦部の前に脆くも崩れ去った



治

アカギと同じ工場で働いていた少年。アカギに憧れ込み、ついてきた。

登場人物紹介

前巻までのあらすじ

昭和33年。生命を賭けたヤクザとの麻雀勝負に敗れつつあった南郷を助けた13歳の少年。彼こそ後に裏の麻雀界に君臨することになる赤木しげるであった。特に、盲目の雀士・市川を破った夜は、伝説と化した。しかし、直後に赤木は姿を消し、5年余りが経った…。そして昭和39年。最初の伝説の夜に立ち合った不良刑事・安岡によるニセアカギ売り込みが、第二の伝説の幕を開いた……。

巧みに倍プッシュ勝負に持ち込んだ藤沢組代打ち・浦部を異端の戦略で打ち破り、赤木は再び姿を消す。

しかしその直後、噂を聞きつけて治と赤木の前に現れた麻雀打ち・仲井。その半荘1回有り金勝負で、仲井は赤木から親満を直撃。しかし、赤木は仲井たちの連携プレー〝通し〟を見抜いていた……！

安岡

アカギの伝説を利用し、川田組にニセアカギを売り込んだ不良刑事。

仲井

アカギの金と箔づけを狙って、用意周到な罠を仕掛ける麻雀打ち

目次

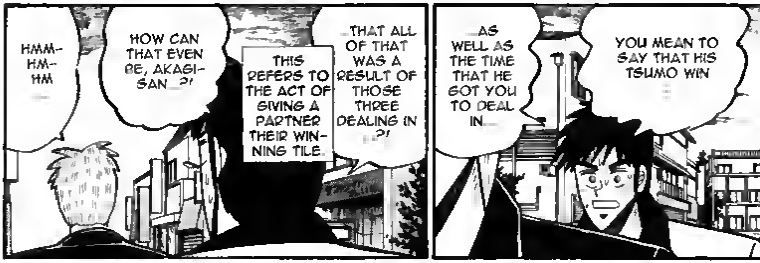
◉近代麻雀平成8年1月号～平成9年6月号所載

CHAPTER 55 - SIGNALS ——— 7
CHAPTER 56 - NOTIFICATION ——— 31
CHAPTER 57 - HOMICIDE ——— 56
CHAPTER 58 - FIRE POWER ——— 81
CHAPTER 59 - VIOLENCE ——— 105
CHAPTER 60 - DEVIATION ——— 129
CHAPTER 61 - HEART ——— 153
CHAPTER 62 - FILTH ——— 177
CHAPTER 63 - MEANINGLESS ——— 201

第55話 通し

CHAPTER 55 - SIGNALS

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT ...?!
WHA
はん


HMM-HM-HM
HOW CAN THAT EVEN BE, AKAGI-SAN...?!
THIS REFERS TO THE ACT OF GIVING A PARTNER THEIR WINNING TILE
THAT ALL OF THAT WAS A RESULT OF THOSE THREE DEALING IN...?!
...AS WELL AS THE TIME THAT HE GOT YOU TO DEAL IN...
YOU MEAN TO SAY THAT HIS TSUMO WIN

ALL THEY NEED TO DO IT IS THE EASIEST OF ALL EASY CHEATING TECHNIQUES
IT'S ACTUALLY QUITE SIMPLE VERY SIMPLE, IN FACT
HUH...?
ANY AMATEUR OFF THE STREET COULD DO IT WITH A LITTLE BIT OF PRACTICE

OF COURSE, OF COURSE!
I'LL TAKE TWO HI-LITES
HAVE A NICE DAY, SIR!

THEY MAKE USE OF THE BLIND SPOT THAT COMES IN THE FORM OF THE NEXT DRAW WHEN THEY CALL BACK AND FORTH LIKE THAT
THAT'S WHERE THEIR POWER LIES.
IT'S A COMBI-NATION PLAY.
YEAH
OSAMU, YOU REMEMBER HOW THEY WERE CALLING BACK AND FORTH SO FAST FOR THE PAST FEW GAMES, RIGHT?

...WOULD ALWAYS RETURN THE TILE HE DREW TO THE WALL AS I'M SURE YOU RECALL
...THE PLAYER TO HIS RIGHT, WHOSE TURN TO DRAW CAME NEXT AFTER NAKAI...
WHEN THE PLAYER TO NAKAI'S LEFT WOULD CALL THE TILE THAT NAKAI PLAYED AFTER A RIICHI
PON!
WHEN HE DOES THAT, HE SWITCHES IT OUT FOR NAKAI'S WINNING TILE
THAT IS, IF HE CALLS ON THE TILE THAT COMES OUT OF THE HAND OF THE OTHER TEAMMATE
AND BY USING THE SAME EXACT TRICK, IF THE TILE-SWITCHER THEN CALLS PON
NAKAI'S WINNING TILE THAT HE HAD PREVIOUSLY SWITCHED OUT
SINCE THE PLAYER LEFT OF NAKAI CALLED
IT'S A VERY EASY AND SIMPLE SLEIGHT OF HAND
THAT TILE IS SHIFTED OVER TO HIM...
AND SO HE GETS HIS TSU-MO
IN THE MOMENT THAT HE DRAWS HIS TILE
WHA...?
AND BY THE TIME HE PUTS THE TILE IN HIS FINGERS BACK INTO THE WALL, THE TWO HAVE SWITCHED PLACES
HE HAS THE TILE THAT NAKAI NEEDS TO GET IN ORDER TO WIN PALMED IN HIS HAND

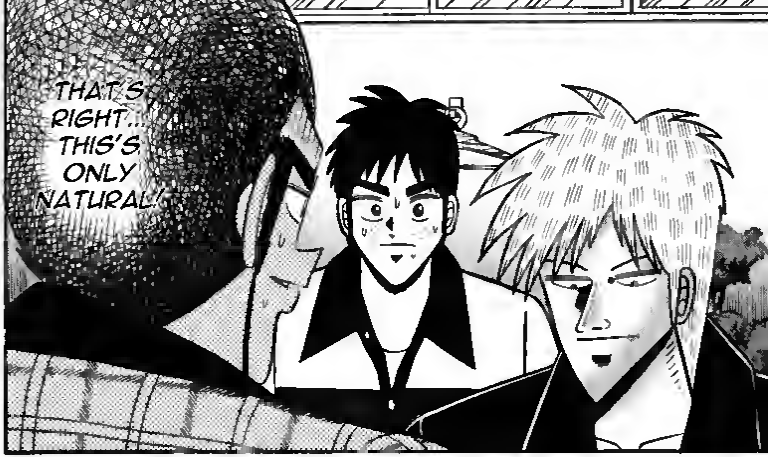
YEAH
NOW, WASN'T THAT SIMPLE?
SINCE I WAS IN RIICHI, I HAD TO DEAL IT.
...INSTEAD GOES TO ME, AS IT DID IN THE ROUND WE LEFT OFF ON.
AKAGI-SAN
AND ONCE HE WAS DONE WITH THAT
TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, THE THINGS THAT HE HAD SAID STUNNED ME BEYOND WORDS
...IT ALL SEEMED SO PERFECT, THAT EVEN AFTER I'D HEARD ALL ABOUT IT
ONCE I UNDER-STOOD HOW THEY DID IT
FOR THIS, TOO
I WAS STILL LEFT IN STUNNED SILENCE
WHAT SIGNALS THEY USE AND THINGS LIKE THAT, BUT
...TOLD ME ABOUT HOW THEY COMMU-NICATE WITH EACH OTHER
ミッキ食堂

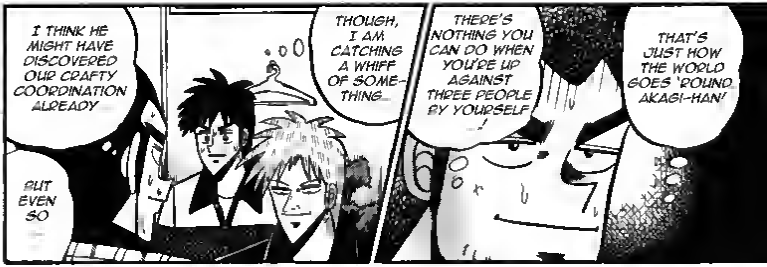
ざわ・
ざわ・
AND THAT HE WOULD PULL OFF A CHAIN OF SUCCESSIVE VICTORIES
BUT EVEN STILL, HE SAID THAT HE WOULDN'T LOSE
THERE'S ONLY 5 MORE ROUNDS UNTIL THIS SINGLE-HANCHAN MATCH ENDS
ゲニッ
IF HE CAN'T BEAT THE COMBINED EFFORTS OF THE THREE OF THEM
BUT STILL, EVEN IF THOSE SIGNALS ARE OBVIOUS AND PREDICTABLE
IT WILL STILL BE ENOUGH TO MAKE HIM LOSE THIS
RIICHI!
REGARDING THE PARTNERS SIGNALS
WHAT AKAGI-SAN SAID TO ME AT THAT TIME...
A FAR CRY FROM FLAWLESS METHODS
EXTREMELY ROUGH
...MORE LIKE THE TOOLS OF AMATEURS
THEIR TECHNIQUES WOULD PROVE TO BE
WAS THAT, AS THE BATTLE WORE ON
THE BATTLE RESUMES

FIRST, WHEN HE TURNS HIS DISCARD SIDEWAYS TO CALL RIICHI...
AKAGI-SAN SAID THAT THERE'S TWO THINGS HE DOES TO SIGNAL TO HIS FRIENDS.
WHEN NAKAI DOES RIICHIS ...
THAT'S IT..!
SO THE FIRST SIGNAL DESCRIBES WHAT SUIT HE'S WAI-TING ON.
AND IF IT'S PULLED DOWN TOWARDS HIM, THAT MEANS PINZU.
IF HE LEAVES IT IN THE MIDDLE, THAT MEANS SOUZU.
IF HE PUSHES IT UP TO THE TOP ROW, THAT MEANS IT'S A MANZU WAIT.
IF HE DISCARDS AT THE SAME TIME HE THROWS THE STICK ON THE TABLE...
...AND THEN THROWS THE RIICHI STICK OUT
IF HE DIS-CARDS THE TILE FIRST
ONCE HE'S DECLARED RIICHI AND NEEDS TO THROW THE 1000 POINT RIICHI STICK ON THE TABLE
AND THE SEC-OND THING IS
...THAT MEANS HIS WAIT IS ON 3, 5, OR 8
THAT MEANS THAT HIS WAIT IS ON 1, 4, AND 7
THE TIMING FOR HIM PUTTING IT DOWN DESCRIBES WHAT NUMBERS IT IS

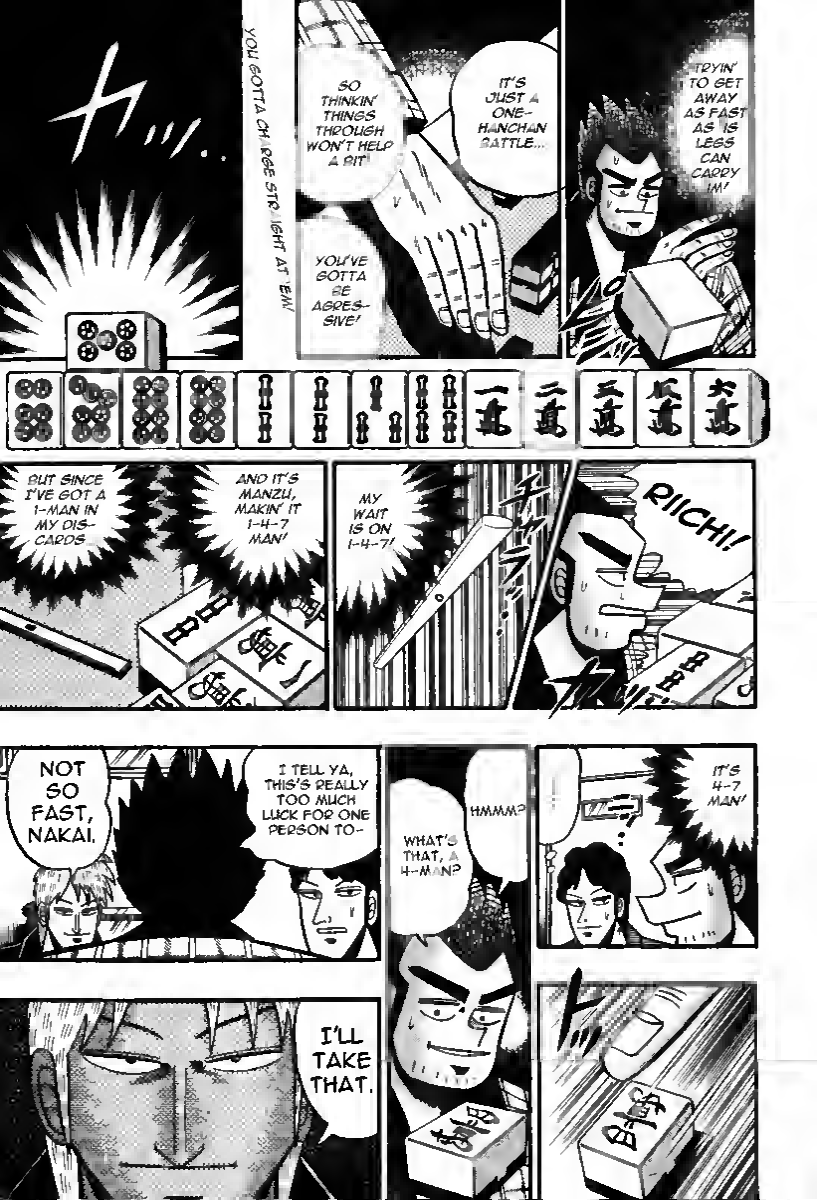
THIS RIICHI HE'S MADE WITH THE TON
SO WITH ALL OF THAT IN MIND...
THAT MEANS HE'S WAITING ON 3, 6, OR 9
IF HE TOSSES THE STICK OUT AND THEN DISCARDS THE TILE...
2-5-8 MAN, HUH...
AND SINCE THE TILE HE USED TO RIICHI IS PUSHED UP TO THE POW ABOVE IT, IT'S A MANZU WAIT
SO THAT MEANS THAT IT'S 2, 5, OR 8
IF I REMEMBER CORRECTLY, HE DID BOTH OF THEM AT THE SAME TIME...
RON!
IT'S 5-8 MAN ?
AND SINCE THERE'S A 2-MAN IN HIS DISCARDS ALREADY

ANYONE COULD DO WHAT HE JUST DID!
WITH THREE PEOPLE GANGING UP ON ONE PERSON
IT'S OBVIOUS THAT HE'S CAUGHT UP TO US WITH THIS, BUT
WHAT'S HE GETTING SO DAMN PROUD FOR?
DOESN'T MATTER HOW CHEAP THE HAND IS...
WELL, WELL... AIN'T THIS JUST GREAT? IT'S FANTASTIC!
HNN-HN-HN
THE DIFFER-ENCE 'TWEEN ME 'N' AKAGI-HAN IS JUST 1300!
WITH THIS 26OO POINTS
HNN-HN
IF ONLY UP TO THIS POINT
HE REALLY CAN SAY THAT THINGS ARE GETTING BETTER AND BETTER FOR HIM
IT'S TRUE THAT THAT BASTARD IS REALLY TAKING AKAGI-SAN TO THE BANK...
BUT EVEN THOUGH IT'S DIS-GRACE-FUL...
THIS GUY
HMM-HM-HM
AIN'T THAT RIGHT?
WITH THIS WIN, IT LOOKS LIKE I'M FINALLY RIGHT ON YOUR TAIL!
IT WAS A LONG WAY TO COME, BUT...

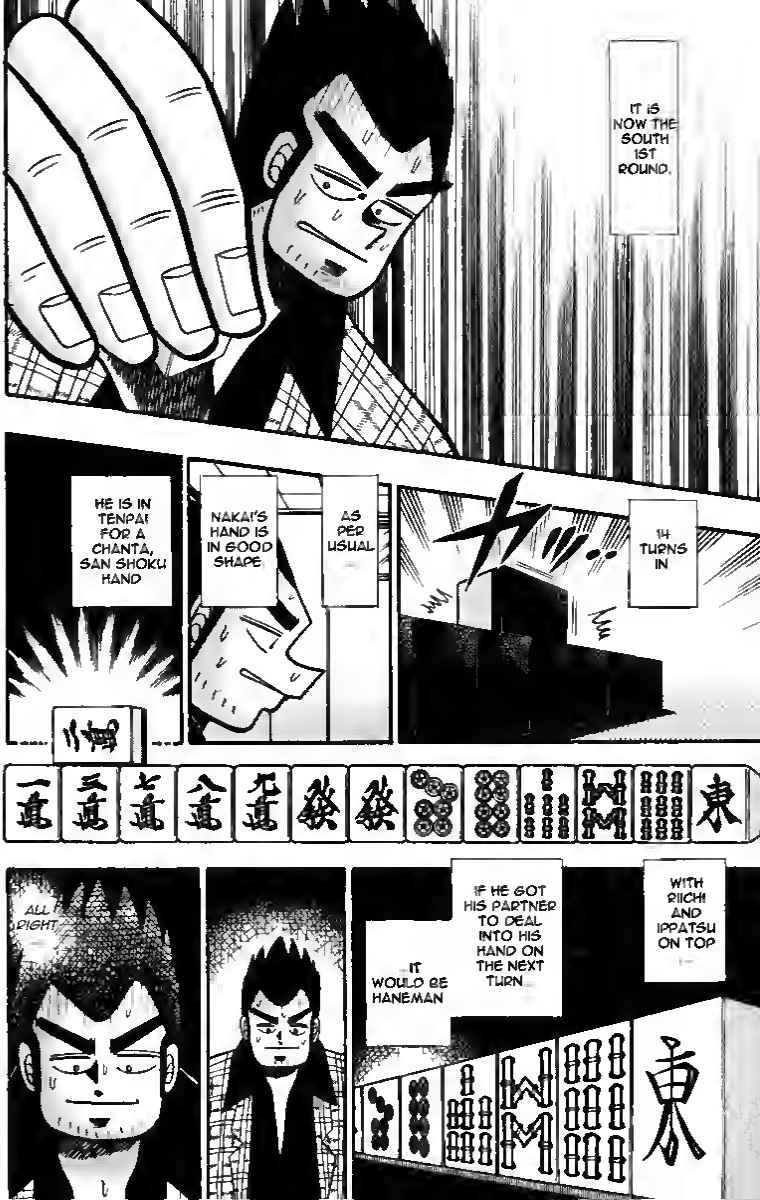

THAT'S RIGHT... THIS'S ONLY NATURAL.


I THINK HE MIGHT HAVE DISCOVERED OUR CRAFTY COORDINATION ALREADY
BUT EVEN SO
THOUGH, I AM CATCHING A WHIFF OF SOME-THING...
THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO WHEN YOU'RE UP AGAINST THREE PEOPLE BY YOURSELF!
THAT'S JUST HOW THE WORLD GOES 'ROUND, AKAGI-HAN!

JUST SPRINTING AND SPRINTING
THE WAY THINGS ARE NOW, HE'S SPRINTING
HE'S GOT NO PROOF THAT WE'RE TEAMIN' UP RIGHT HERE!
IT'S STILL JUST A SUSPICION, SO HE'S NOT TO-TALLY CERTAIN
SO IN THAT CASE
HE CAN'T REALLY COMPLAIN 'BOUT WHAT WE'RE DOIN' YET!
THE WAY THINGS ARE FOR HIM AT THE MOMENT


TRYIN' TO GET AWAY AS FAST AS IS LESS CAN CARRY IM!
IT'S JUST A ONE-HANCHAN BATTLE...
SO THINKIN' THINGS THROUGH WON'T HELP A BIT!
YOU'VE GOTTA BE AGRES-SIVE!
YOU GOTTA CHARGE STRAIGHT AT 'EM!
RIICHI!
MY WAIT IS ON 1-4-7!
AND IT'S MANZU, MAKIN' IT 1-4-7 MAN!
BUT SINCE I'VE GOT A 1-MAN IN MY DIS-CARDS
IT'S 4-7 MAN!
HMMM?
WHAT'S THAT, A 4-MAN?
I TELL YA, THIS'S REALLY TOO MUCH LUCK FOR ONE PERSON TO-
NOT SO FAST, NAKAI.
I'LL TAKE THAT.

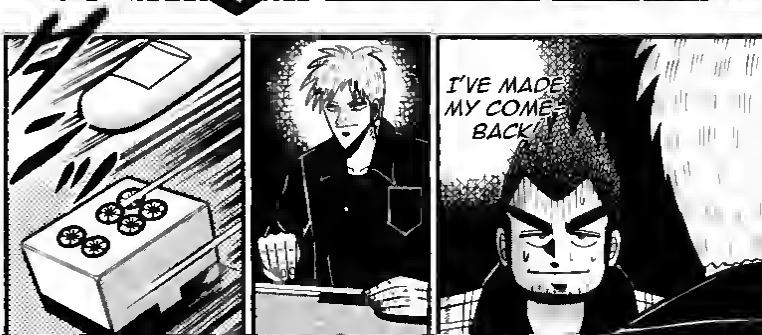
FANPAI, DORA 3.
ATAMA HANE.
MANGAN.
NO
OUR SIGNALS...?!
HAS HE FIGURED THEM OUT...?!
NO WAY... DID HE...
HMM-HM
GH ...!!
HE WON THAT HAND
BRING-ING IT TO THE SOUTH SET
NAKAI SHAKES OFF THIS THOUGHT
IT SHOULD BE IM-POSSIBLE
HE FORCIBLY HAD HIS HAND DEALT INTO VIA SIGNALS
AND IN THE EAST 4TH ROUND, TOO
HE PREVENTED HIMSELF FROM FALLING INTO THE SWAMP OF SUSPICION
IT'S NOT POS-SIBLE FOR HIM TO HAVE DONE THAT
WE'RE STILL ONLY IN THE EAST SET


IT IS NOW THE SOUTH 1ST ROUND.
14 TURNS IN
AS PER USUAL
NAKAI'S HAND IS IN GOOD SHAPE
HE IS IN TENPAI FOR A CHANTA, SAN SHOKU HAND
ALL RIGHT
IT WOULD BE HANEMAN
IF HE GOT HIS PARTNER TO DEAL INTO HIS HAND ON THE NEXT TURN
WITH RIICHI AND IPPATSU ON TOP

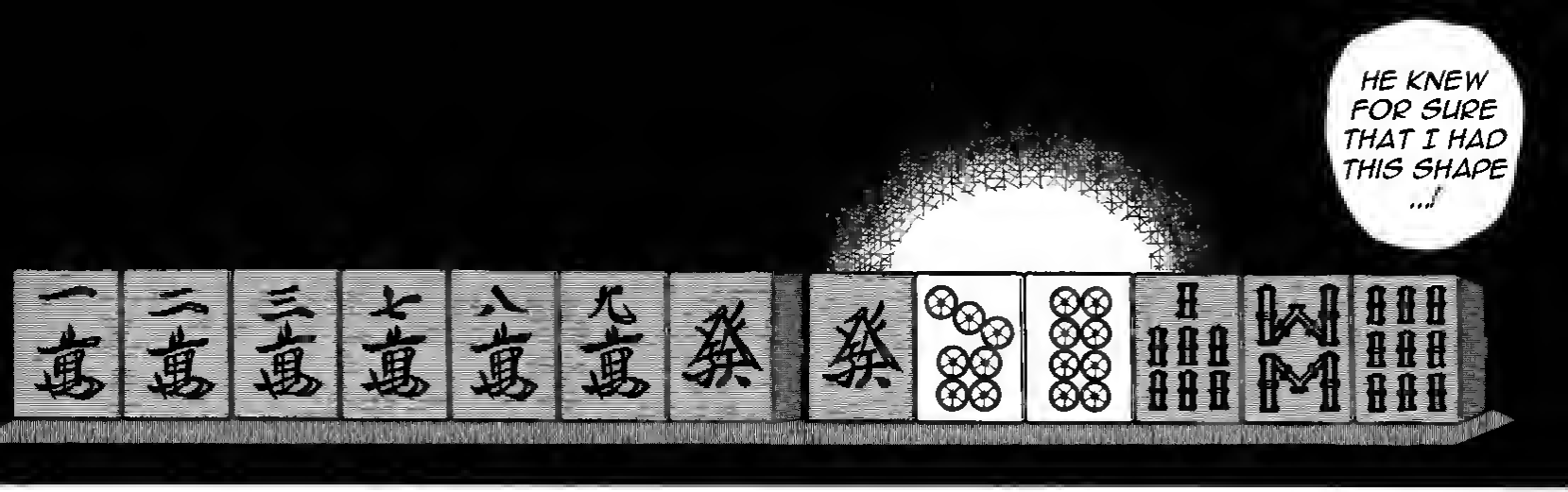
MY COMEBACK CAN BE COMPLETE!
WITH ALL'A THAT
BUT UNLIKE LAST TIME, WE DON'T HAVE TA WORRY ABOUT AN ATAMA HANE.
FOR THE TIME BEING, AKAGI DOESN'T SEEM AS THOUGH HIS HAND IS IN TENPAI AT THE MOMENT
THE 9-PIN
AT THE MOMENT, THE GUY TO MY LEFT HAS THE TILE THAT WILL TAKE MY HAND TO HANEMAN
BUT EVEN SO
THIS TON IS OF AKAGI'S SEAT WIND, AND IT'S A LIVE TILE
IS THIS TON
東
THE ONLY PROBLEM I'VE GOT
RIICHI!
I'VE GOTTA MAKE IT PASS!!
PON.
HMM-HM
.....

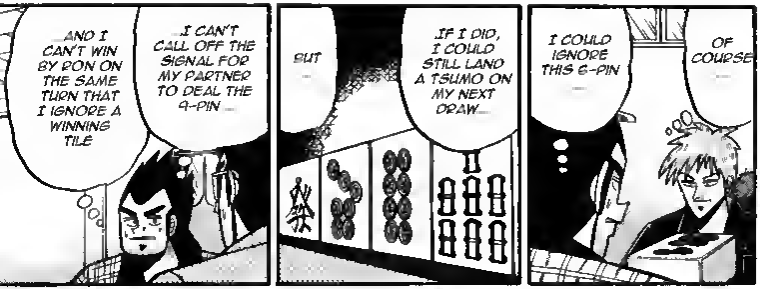
IT DOESN'T MATTER IF HE CALLS
THAT'S FINE... NO PROB!
HNN-HN

NO PROBLEM AT ALL!
...CAN END IT ALL WITH HIS 9-PIN!
ON HIS NEXT TURN, MY BUDDY OVER HERE
AS LONG AS IT'S NOT A RON


I'VE MADE MY COME-BACK!

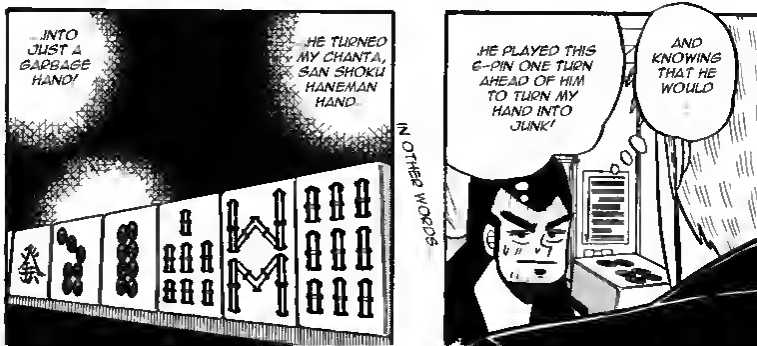
THE GRAND MOM COULD WIN OF A THAT
HE'S REALLY SEEN RIGHT THROUGH IT
THIS GUY ...
THIS GUY ...
IT'S NOT JUST OUR SIGNALS ...
... NO ...!
HE KNOWS ALL OF OUR SIGNALS. !!

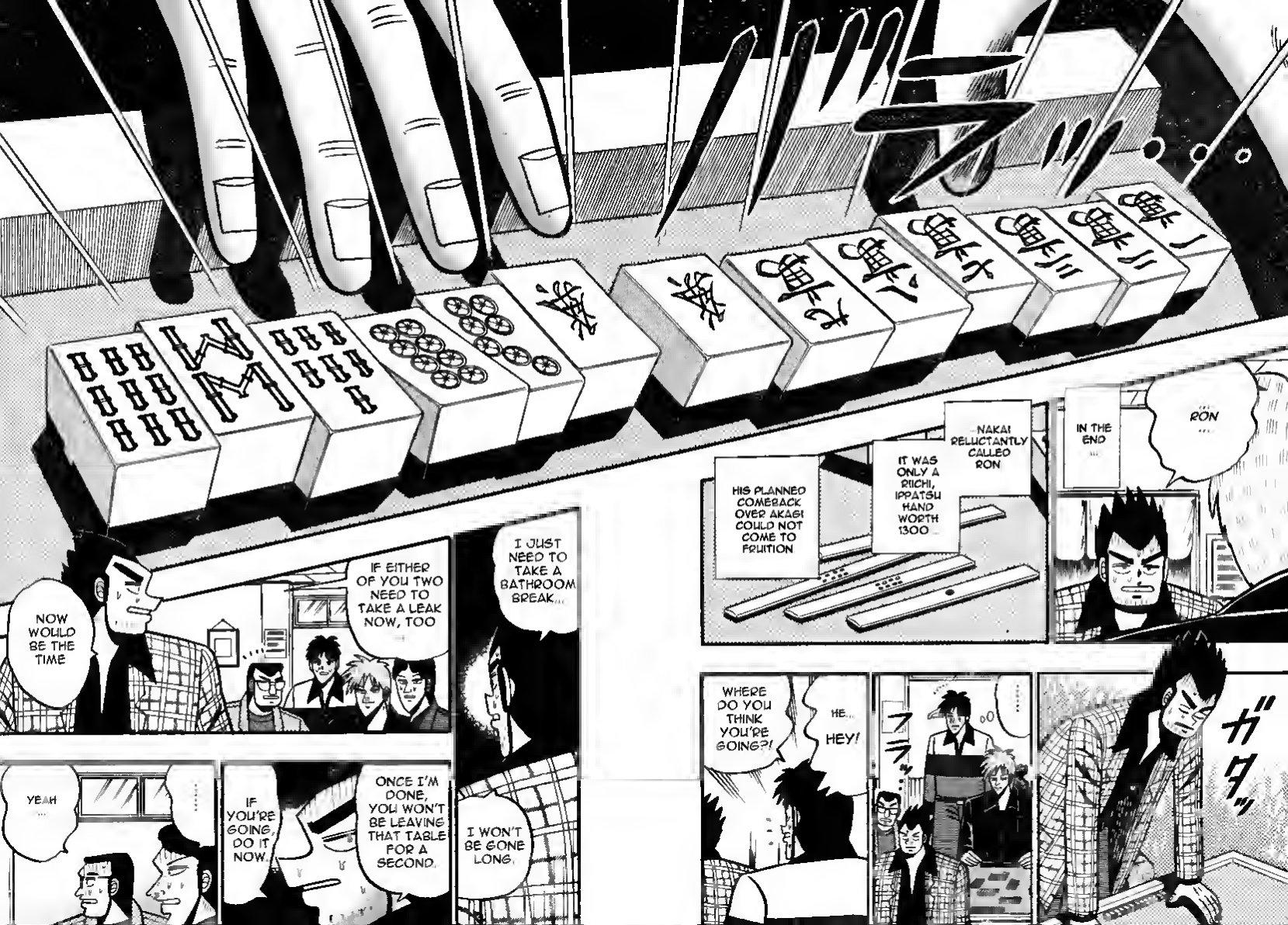

HE KNEW FOR SURE THAT I HAD THIS SHAPE ...!


...AND I CAN'T WIN BY RON ON THE SAME TURN THAT I IGNORE A WINNING TILE
...I CAN'T CALL OFF THE SIGNAL FOR MY PARTNER TO DEAL THE 9-PIN
BUT
...IF I DID, I COULD STILL LAND A TSUMO ON MY NEXT DRAW...
I COULD IGNORE THIS 6-PIN
OF COURSE

...WOULD PLAY THE UPPER TILE OF MY EDGE WAIT, THE 9-PIN !
...HE KNEW THAT THE SOUTH PLAYER
THAT IS TO SAY
AND SINCE HE DID KNOW FOR SURE, HE DEALT THAT 6-PIN...!!

SHIT
...I DEALT THAT RISKY TON TILE THAT WAS ALSO HIS SEAT WIND !
AND ALL OF THIS JUST BECAUSE
...BUT I'D HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO DO JUST THAT !
IT WILL BE HARD TO DRAW THE WINNING TILE MYSELF


...INTO JUST A GARBAGE HAND!
...HE TURNED MY CHANTA, SAN SHOKU HANEMAN HAND...
IN OTHER WORDS
...HE PLAYED THIS 6-PIN ONE TURN AHEAD OF HIM TO TURN MY HAND INTO JUNK!
AND KNOWING THAT HE WOULD


...RON...
IN THE END...
...NAKAI RELUCTANTLY CALLED RON
IT WAS ONLY A RIICHI, IPPATSU HAND WORTH 1300...
HIS PLANNED COMEBACK OVER AKAGI COULD NOT COME TO FRUITION
NOW WOULD BE THE TIME
IF EITHER OF YOU TWO NEED TO TAKE A LEAK NOW, TOO
I JUST NEED TO TAKE A BATHROOM BREAK...
I WON'T BE GONE LONG.
YEAH...
IF YOU'RE GOING, DO IT NOW.
ONCE I'M DONE, YOU WON'T BE LEAVING THAT TABLE FOR A SECOND.
WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING?!
HE...
HEY!
フラッ
ガタッ

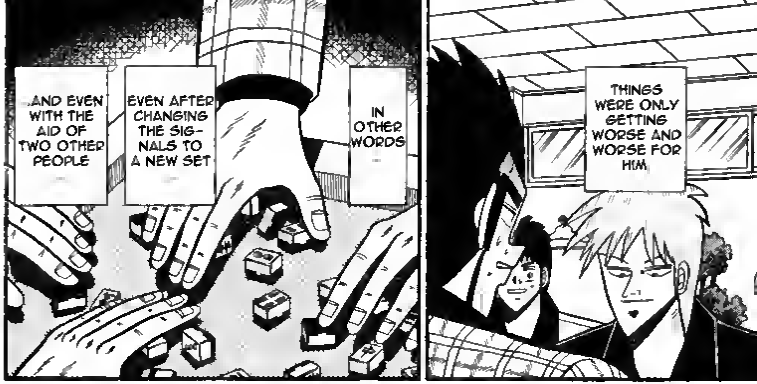
KEH!
HOW COULD ANYONE BEAT ALL THREE OF US AT ONCE?!
I DIDN'T SEE ANY-THING WRONG
WHAT'S GOING ON, MAN?
HUH?
ALL OF OUR SECRETS HAVE BEEN EXPOSED.
IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT YOU THINK
WE'VE GOT NO OTHER CHOICE.
'FRAID SO
THEY... THEY HAVE?!
HE'S BEEN PAYIN' TOO MUCH ATTENTION.
WE'VE GOT TO CHANGE UP OUR SIGNALS...

CHANGING THE SIGNALS AROUND
HE WILL CHANGE UP THEIR SIGNALS
AFTER CONSULTING WITH HIS PARTNERS
NAKAI HAS DECIDED IT IS TIME
HE HOPES TO BE ABLE TO CATCH AKAGI OFF GUARD!
AND BY USING THESE NEW SIGNALS
AND HAD THEM CHANGE TO USING THAT
IN LIGHT OF THIS DISCOVERY, NAKAI MADE UP NEW SIGNALS
HE KNEW WHAT THE SIGNALS WERE
THIS WAS DECIDED BECAUSE AKAGI HAD ALREADY SEEN THROUGH THEM
I'M DEFINITELY STILL IN RANGE!
I CAN STILL MAKE IT THERE...
NOT EXACTLY UNREACHABLE
...IS JUST AT 1800 NOW.
THE DIFFERENCE 'TWEEN US
NO MATTER HOW YOU LOOK AT IT

CHAPTER 56 - NOTIFICATION

第56話 申告

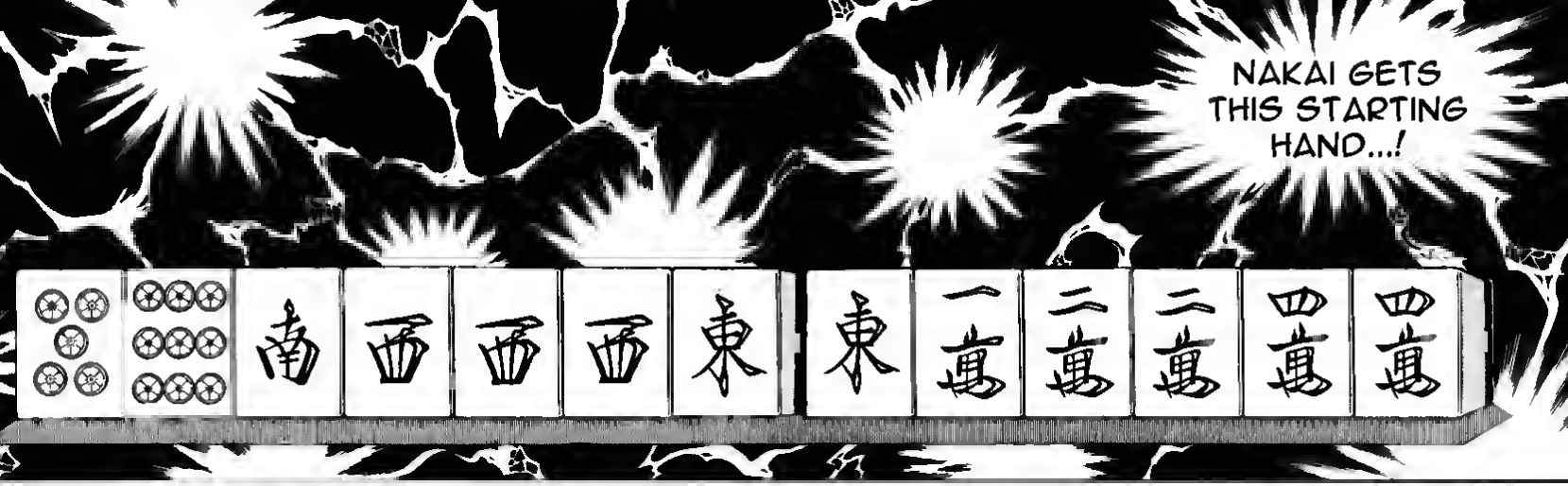
THEN
IF WE CAN MANAGE TO GET SOME FLOW IN THOSE 3 ROUNDS
...AND THERE'S ONLY 3 MORE ROUNDS LEFT
NOW WE'VE CHANGED UP OUR SIGNALS
HIS SENSES ARE REALLY SOMETHIN' BUT...
SINCE HE FIGURED OUT OUR SIGNALS IN SUCH A SHORT TIME LIKE THAT
...CAN'T POSSIBLY BEAT US!
AKAGI...
UP AGAINST ALL THREE OF US WITH NEW SIGNALS...


...AND EVEN WITH THE AID OF TWO OTHER PEOPLE
EVEN AFTER CHANGING THE SIGNALS TO A NEW SET
IN OTHER WORDS...
THINGS WERE ONLY GETTING WORSE AND WORSE FOR HIM.

...WOULD SWIFTLY STRIKE TO ELIMINATE SUCH THINGS!
...AKAGI...
BEFORE HE WAS EVEN ABLE TO USE THEM...
EVEN WITH ALL OF THE VARIOUS ADVANTAGES THAT NAKAI HAD AT HIS DISPOSAL...

TSUMO!

IT'S ONLY THE 5TH TURN...!!
NO WAY...
URGH...!
AKAGI HAD COMPLETED YET ANOTHER HAND!
HOW...
WHAT IS THIS?!
HOW CAN THIS BE HAPPENING?!
FUCK!
IS THERE NO CHANCE LEFT FOR ME NOW?!
IT'S LIKE HE CAN CONTROL THE FLOW ITSELF!
I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS SUDDEN WAVE OF LUCK HE'S GETTIN'
IN HIS VERY LAST CHANCE, THE FINAL ROUND...
AH...!!
THIS AIN'T SOME-
THIS AIN'T SOME JOKE HERE!!
FUCK


NAKAI GETS THIS STARTING HAND...!

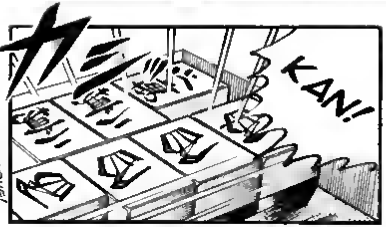
I'M FORCIN' MY WAY THROUGH!!

WITH HON ITSU AND TOI TOI

DORA!!
THAT GIVES ME

...TO THIS NAN!

I'LL CHANGE THE NEW DORA
FIRST, USIN' A SLEIGHT OF HAND


KAN!
BUT NOW I CAN MOVE!
I'M NOT GONNA LET THIS CHANCE GO TO WASTE!

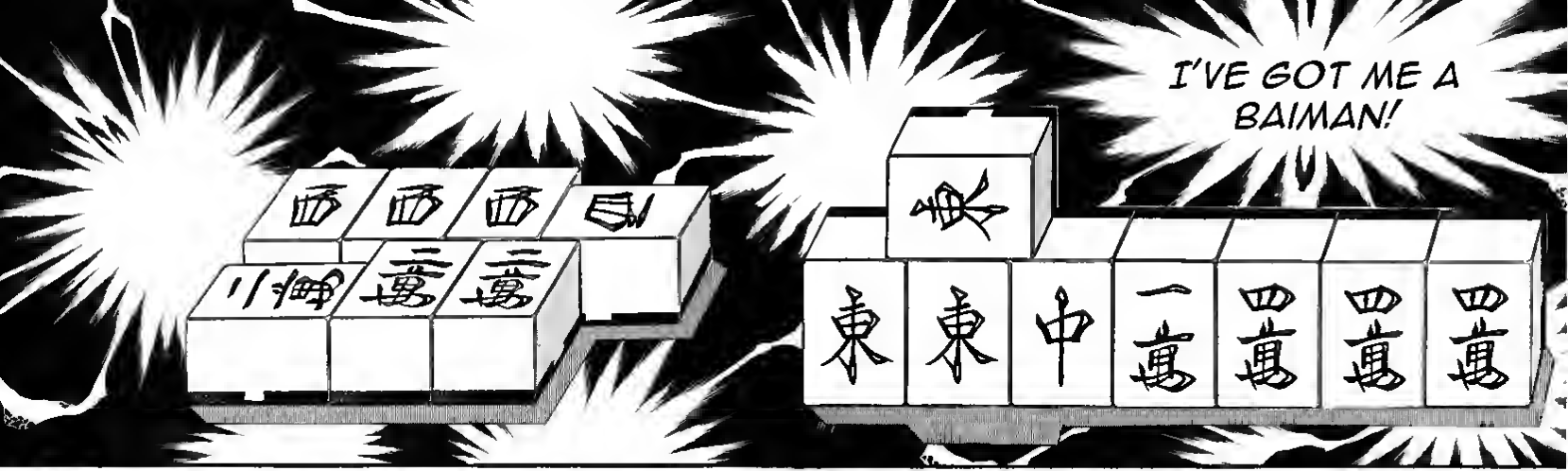
I'VE GOT MYSELF A FIGHTIN' HAND!
AT THE END OF IT ALL

THIS IS IT...!

AND MY FLOW WAS GETTIN' WORSE AND WORSE...

THINGS WERE STARTIN' TO WEAR DOWN...

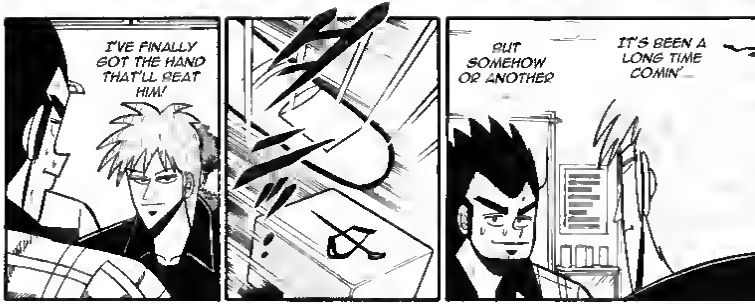
PON!

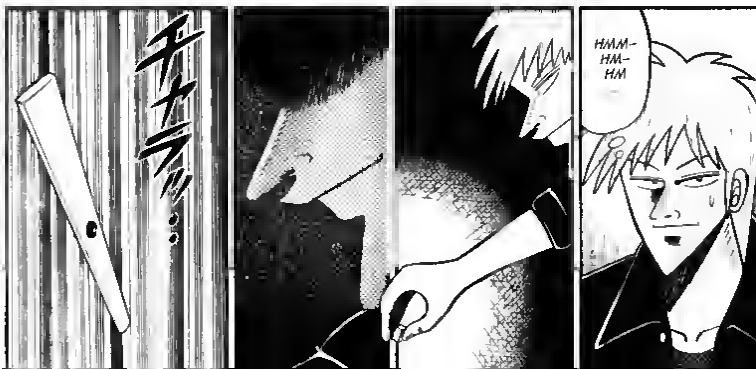

I'VE GOT ME A BAIMAN!

WE CAN MAKE A BAIMAN JUST LIKE THAT!
WITH THAT, THE GUY WHO GOES AFTER ME CAN DEAL IN JUST FINE
I'LL GET AN 1-MAN SINGLE WAIT!
AND TOSS THE CHUN OUT LIKE THAT
IF I KEEP THE 1-MAN RIGHT NOW...
JUST ONE MORE GO, AND I CAN TELL THE GUY TO MY LEFT TO CALL RICHI!
EVEN WITH THIS SACRIFICIAL BAIMAN...
THERE'S STILL A 3000-POINT GAP...
BUT IF I HOLD IT OFF FOR ONE MORE TURN...
SO IF I WANT TO OVERTAKE HIM...
STILL, I'VE GOT 16000 POINTS IN DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ME AND AKAGI...
I'D OVERTAKE AKAGI FOR SURE!
WITH THAT I'D BE GETTING 17000 POINTS!

BETTER YET, I GOT IT IN JUST 5 TURNS
AND NOW, IT'S IN TENPAI!
A BAIMAN, TWISTIN' THE ARM OF FATE!
I CAN STILL SURVIVE BY SIGNALIN' MY BUDDY OVER HERE TO DEAL INTO MY HAND!
BUT EVEN IF HE DOES MAKE IT ALL THE WAY TO TENPAI...
THAT'S THE GUY TO MY RIGHT!
AS I'VE COME TO EXPECT, HE'S CATCHIN' UP PRETTY FAST...
I GOT MY TENPAI BEFORE ANYONE ELSE!

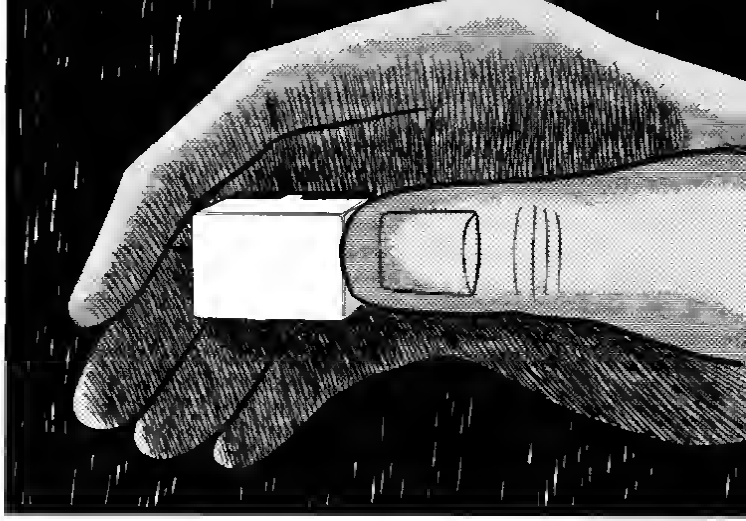
I'VE FINALLY GOT 'IM ON THE ROPES!

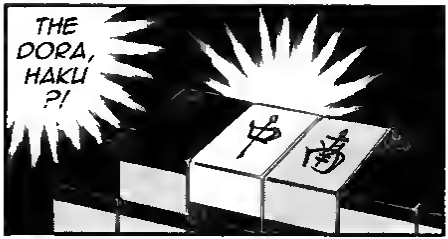

I'VE FINALLY GOT THE HAND THAT'LL BEAT HIM!
BUT SOMEHOW OR ANOTHER
IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME COMIN'...


チャラ
HMM-HM-HM

HUH ...?!
RIICHI.

WHAT A LOAD OF CRAP...
KH ...!
GH ...!
I'LL NEVER ASK FOR ANY THING AGAIN JUST GIVE ME THIS ONE THING !!
I'M BEGGING YOU
GIMME A SAFE TILE !
FUCK!
WHEN ALL I NEEDED WAS ONE MORE PUSH...
RIGHT AT THE LAST MINUTE

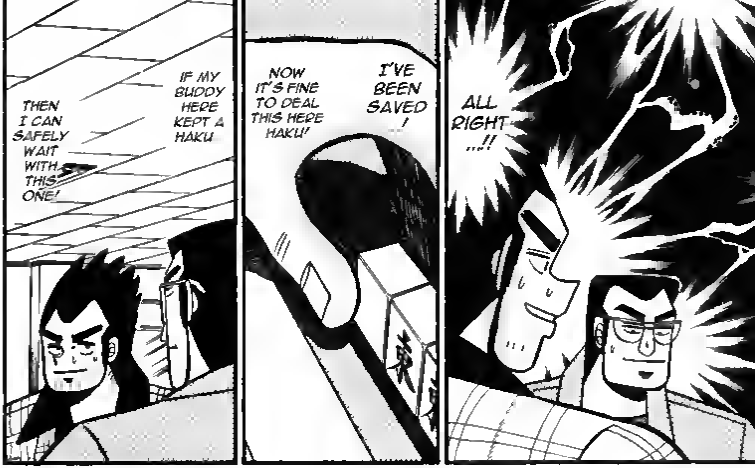



THE DORA, HAKU ?!

GH ...!!

ALL I NEEDED WAS FOR THIS ONE D*MN TILE TO MAKE IT PAST HIM
I MEAN, AT THE LAST SECOND!
THIS IS BULLSHIT !!

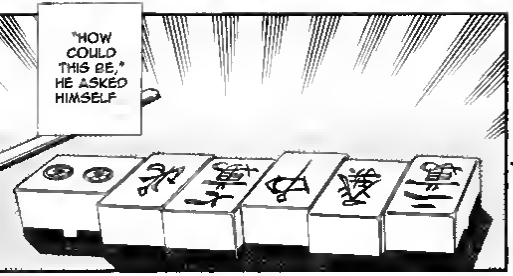
IF FOUR-EYES OVER THERE KEPT A SPARE HAKU FOR WHATEVER REASON, THERE'D BE NO PROBLEM
BUT THAT'S PROLLY TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE
WHAT FUCKIN' HORSE SHIT!
AND WHAT DO I GET?! THE MOTHER-FUCKIN' DORA?!
HUH ...?!
I JUST GAVE HIM THE SIGNAL TO SHOW IF HE HAS ONE...
BUT DOES HE REALLY ...?!
AH ...!!


THEN I CAN SAFELY WAIT WITH THIS ONE!
IF MY BUDDY HERE KEPT A HAKU
NOW IT'S FINE TO DEAL THIS HERE HAKU!
I'VE BEEN SAVED!
ALL RIGHT...!!

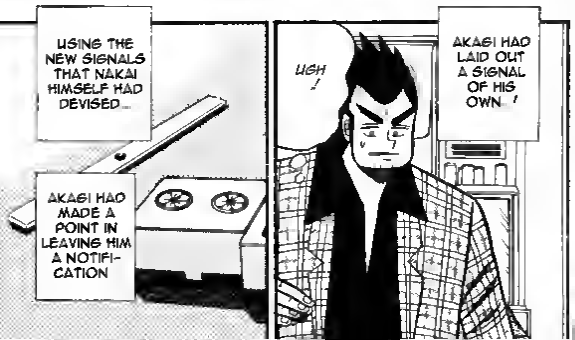
NOW, I CAN CHANGE IT UP FOR THIS 1-MAN!
NO PROBLEM!
AND THANKS TO ATAMA HANE, I'LL GET IT FIRST FOR SURE!
IN THE NEXT TURN, MY ALLY CAN PLAY THE HAKU!
IT'S LIKELY THAT AKAGI HAS THE SAME SINGLE-HAKU
WAIT...BUT

YES, NEARLY ALL OF NAKAI'S MIND...
...WAS CERTAIN THAT THIS 1-MAN WOULD PASS.
90%...
I'VE WON!!
SO THERE'S NO PROBLEM IN PLAYIN' THIS!
I CAN SEE WHERE ALL'A THE 2-MANS ARE, NOW

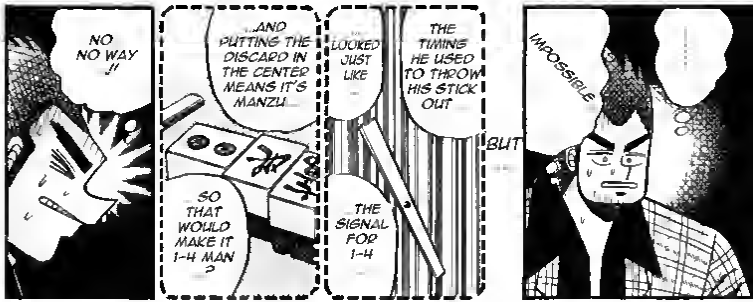
BUT IN THE MOMENT HE WAS TO PLAY IT ON THE TABLE...

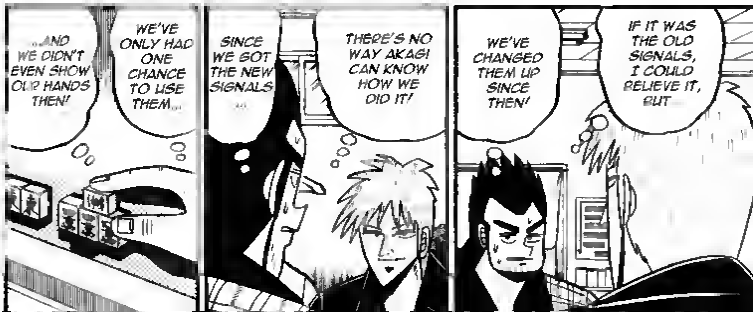

"HOW COULD THIS BE," HE ASKED HIMSELF

A HORRIFYING REALISATION TREMORED THROUGH HIS BODY!
URGH!


USING THE NEW SIGNALS THAT NAKAI HIMSELF HAD DEVISED...
AKAGI HAD MADE A POINT IN LEAVING HIM A NOTIFICATION
UGH!
AKAGI HAD LAID OUT A SIGNAL OF HIS OWN!

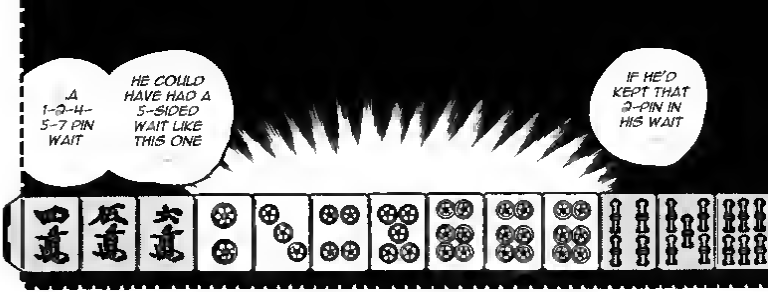
...THAT HIS WAIT WAS 1-4 MAN...!

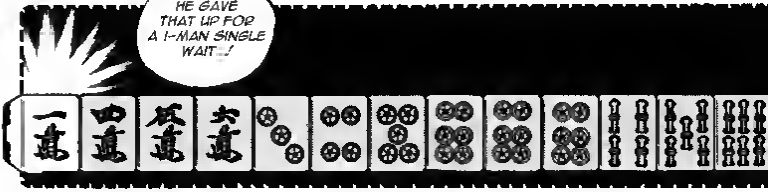

NO NO WAY !!
...AND PUTTING THE DISCARD IN THE CENTER MEANS IT'S MANZU...
SO THAT WOULD MAKE IT 1-4 MAN ?
LOOKED JUST LIKE ...
THE SIGNAL FOR 1-4
THE TIMING HE USED TO THROW HIS STICK OUT
BUT
IMPOSSIBLE

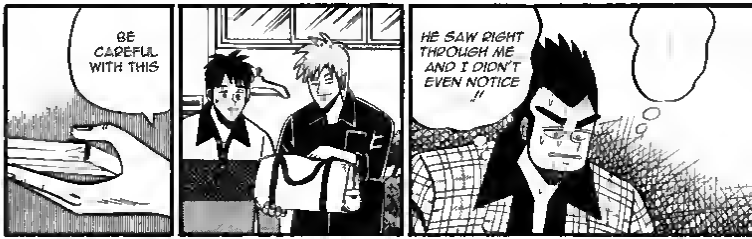

...AND WE DIDN'T EVEN SHOW OUR HANDS THEN!
WE'VE ONLY HAD ONE CHANCE TO USE THEM...
SINCE WE GOT THE NEW SIGNALS ...
THERE'S NO WAY AKAGI CAN KNOW HOW WE DID IT!
WE'VE CHANGED THEM UP SINCE THEN!
IF IT WAS THE OLD SIGNALS, I COULD RELIEVE IT, BUT

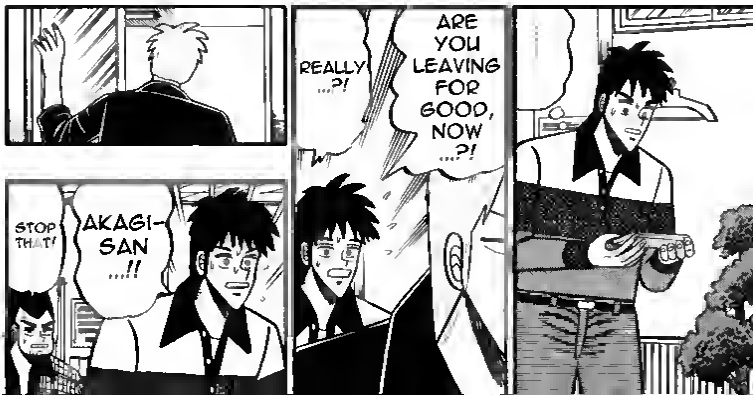
ALTHOUGH...
THIS IS THE ONLY MAN WHO I CAN'T UNDERSTAND...
I SUP-POSE...
WE DID CHANGE UP THE SIGNS IN A BIT OF A HURRY IN THE SHORT TIME WE HAD...
AND THE CHANGES WE ENDED UP MAKING...
...WERE A RATHER IMPROVISED SWITCH...
JUST BASING IT OFF OF THE ORIGINAL SIGNALS WE HAD...
WITHOUT HAVING EVEN SEEN SO MUCH AS A HINT AS TO WHAT WAS IN OUR HANDS...
...COULD HE HAVE FIGURED IT OUT BY SHEER THOUGHT?
NO FUCKIN' WAY...
THERE AIN'T A CHANCE IN HELL!
I CAN'T LET MY-SELF THINK LIKE THAT!
THAT SHIT IS JUST RIDI-CU-LOUS...
HMM-HM-HM...

A 1-MAN WAIT..!
URGH..!
I GUESS THAT'S IT
IT'S TOO BAD, ISN'T IT?
RON.
HMM-HM-HM
THE FACT THAT I'D DEAL THE 1-MAN—
THE NEW SIGNALS THAT WE MADE—
THIS GUY HE READ ME LIKE A BOOK
HE GAVE IT ALL AWAY WITH THE WAY HE PLAYED THAT 2-PIN!
THAT TILE HE USED TO RIICHI—
AND NOT ONLY THAT

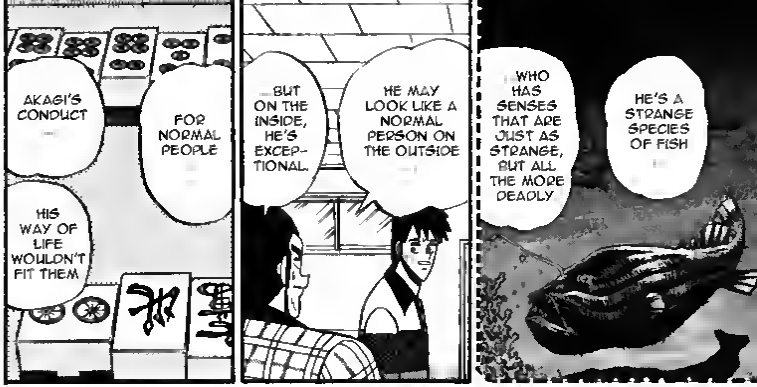

A 1-2-4-5-7 PIN WAIT
HE COULD HAVE HAD A 5-SIDED WAIT LIKE THIS ONE
IF HE'D KEPT THAT 2-PIN IN HIS WAIT

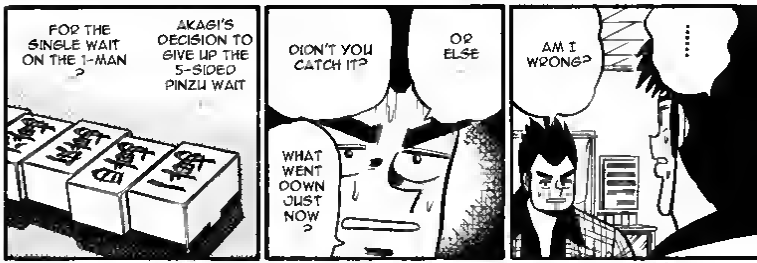

HE GAVE THAT UP FOR A 1-MAN SINGLE WAIT...!


BE CAREFUL WITH THIS
HE SAW RIGHT THROUGH ME AND I DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE !!


STOP THAT!
AKAGI-SAN ...!!
REALLY ...?!
ARE YOU LEAVING FOR GOOD, NOW ...?!

HE AIN'T COMIN' BACK.
THAT MAN ...
HE LIVES IN A WORLD THAT'S DIFFERENT FROM YOURS AND MINE...
...THE WAY HE SEES THINGS ...
...AND THE WAY HE LIVES ARE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT.
THAT IS TO SAY ...
HE DOESN'T NEED TO HAVE A BUNCH'A SMALL FRY SWIMMIN' ROUND HIM ...
THAT MAN IS LIKE... A FISH THAT LURKS AROUND AT THE VERY BOTTOM OF THE SEA...
COMMON FISH LIKE US ...
CAN NEVER DIVE AS DEEP AS HE CAN...
...WE CAN NEVER LIVE LIKE HE DOES


AKAGI'S CONDUCT
FOR NORMAL PEOPLE
HIS WAY OF LIFE WOULDN'T FIT THEM
...BUT ON THE INSIDE, HE'S EXCEP-TIONAL.
HE MAY LOOK LIKE A NORMAL PERSON ON THE OUTSIDE
WHO HAS SENSES THAT ARE JUST AS STRANGE, BUT ALL THE MORE DEADLY
HE'S A STRANGE SPECIES OF FISH


FOR THE SINGLE WAIT ON THE 1-MAN ?
AKAGI'S DECISION TO GIVE UP THE 5-SIDED PINZU WAIT
DION'T YOU CATCH IT?
OR ELSE
WHAT WENT DOWN JUST NOW ?
AM I WRONG?
.....

...BUT THERE'S MORE TO IT THAN LIES ON THE SUR-FACE...
IN ORDER TO DO THAT
THAT MEANS HE HAD TO HAVE READ RIGHT INTO ME WITH THAT 1-MAN SINGLE WAIT
AND HE HAD TO TAKE THAT FAITH AND FOLLOW THROUGH WITH IT...
THAT'S WHAT IT TOOK.
HE HAD TO TRUST HIMSELF ENOUGH TO PUT HIS WHOLE FAITH IN THAT READ HE MADE OF WHAT I HAD...
NO
THAT RIGHT WELL, IT WAS AN UNBELIEVABLE DECISION
SUPPO-SIN' THE 1-MAN WASN'T IN MY HAND WHEN HE DID THAT
HE WOULD'A LOST, FOR SURE

IT'S REGRET-TABLE, BUT
WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO GAMBLE OUR WHOLE LIVES ON READS WE MAKE
PEOPLE LIKE US
IT'S PROBABLY WILL POWER THAT ORDINARY FOLK LIKE YOU AND I CAN NEVER HOPE TO HAVE
EVERY DAY, HE CHASES AFTER THAT LEVEL OF LOSS OR GAIN THAT WE JUST SAW
THAT LEVEL OF WILL POWER
NAKAI
IS JUST PLAIN SPECIAL
THAT MAN
AKAGI-SAN...
.....

若柳

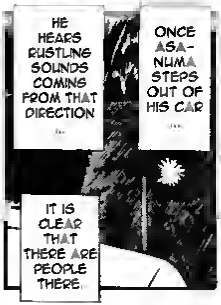
AKAGI

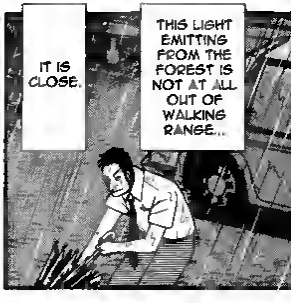
THE GENIUS WHO FELL INTO THE DARKNESS.
A WORK BY FUKUMOTO NOBUYUKI.

第57話 怪死
CHAPTER 57 - HOMICIDE

SHOWA ERA, YEAR 40.
(1965)
IT IS THE MIDDLE OF SUMMER, AUGUST 1ST.
HE IS OUT RATHER LATE TODAY, AT THE EARLY HOUR OF 2:00 AM.
HE IS ON A NIGHT DRIVE THROUGH THESE DEEP PARTS OF THE TAMA MOUNTAINS.
THIS MAN IS ASANUMA KOUICHI, A MEMBER OF THAT VERY SAME TAMA CITY'S COUNCIL OF FOREST PROTECTION.
BE-TWEEN TOKYO AND TAMA CITY
THE LO-CATION IS THE TAMA MOUNTAIN-SIDE...
...AND IS STILL QUITE BUZZED FROM THE LARGE QUANTITIES OF ALCHO-HOL HE CONSUMED.
HE HAS JUST LEFT A FAREWELL PARTY FOR A DEAR FRIEND OF HIS...
...AND IS AL-MOST IN THE CITY, WHEN...
NATURALLY, HE IS DRIVING BACK HOME TO TAMA CITY AT THIS TIME...

ザザザザ…
...HE SEES A LIGHT!

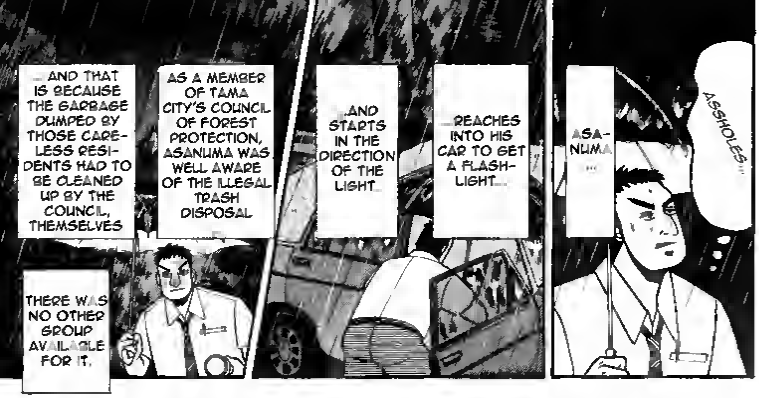

HE HEARS RUSTLING SOUNDS COMING FROM THAT DIRECTION...
ONCE ASA-NUMA STEPS OUT OF HIS CAR...
IT IS CLEAR THAT THERE ARE PEOPLE THERE.

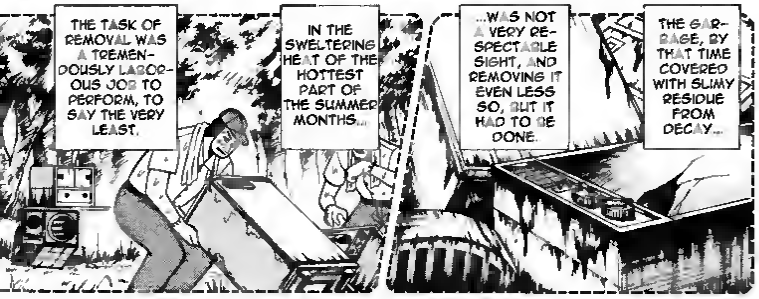

IT IS CLOSE.
THIS LIGHT EMITTING FROM THE FOREST IS NOT AT ALL OUT OF WALKING RANGE...

...UNAU-THORIZED GARBAGE HAD BEEN FOUND LYING AROUND.
HE RECALLS HOW, RECENTLY, AT VARIOUS POINTS IN THE FOREST THAT RUNS ALONG THE SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN...

HE FORMS AN IDEA AS TO WHO IT MIGHT BE...
UPON DISCO-VER-ING THIS

...HAVE BEEN ARBITRARILY DUMPED THERE BY NEARBY RE-SIDENTS, NOT WANTING TO DEAL WITH IT THEMSELVES.
THIS CAN ONLY MEAN THAT LARGE, CUMBERSOME ITEMS OF TRASH THAT PEOPLE NO LONGER HAVE A USE FOR...


...AND THAT IS BECAUSE THE GARBAGE DUMPED BY THOSE CARELESS RESIDENTS HAD TO BE CLEANED UP BY THE COUNCIL, THEMSELVES
AS A MEMBER OF TAMA CITY'S COUNCIL OF FOREST PROTECTION, ASANUMA WAS WELL AWARE OF THE ILLEGAL TRASH DISPOSAL
THERE WAS NO OTHER GROUP AVAILABLE FOR IT.
...AND STARTS IN THE DIRECTION OF THE LIGHT.
...REACHES INTO HIS CAR TO GET A FLASHLIGHT...
ASA-NUMA ...
ASSHOLES...


THE TASK OF REMOVAL WAS A TREMENDOUSLY LABORIOUS JOB TO PERFORM, TO SAY THE VERY LEAST.
IN THE SWELTERING HEAT OF THE HOTTEST PART OF THE SUMMER MONTHS...
...WAS NOT A VERY RESPECTABLE SIGHT, AND REMOVING IT EVEN LESS SO, BUT IT HAD TO BE DONE.
THE GARBAGE, BY THAT TIME COVERED WITH SLIMY RESIDUE FROM DECAY...

WHAT THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU'RE-...?!
HEY, YOU!
LET'S!!

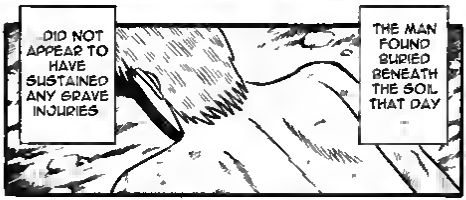
HOW PATHETIC ...
IT REALLY IS THEM ...
AND HERE HE WAS, ABLE TO PUT A STOP TO IT AT THE SCENE OF THE CRIME ...

THOSE DAMN PARASITES ...
AS YOU MIGHT IMAGINE, HE HAD TO DO JUST THAT TO ENFORCE THE LAW

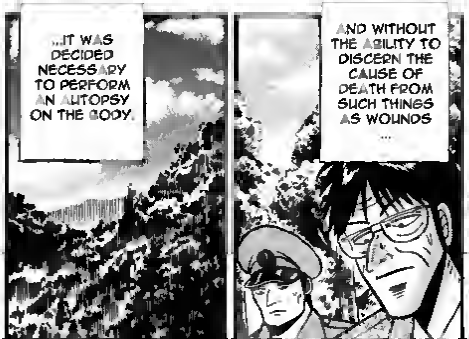
AAAAA
AAAAA
AAAUU
GGHH
HHH!!
GYAUGH!!
WAUGH!!

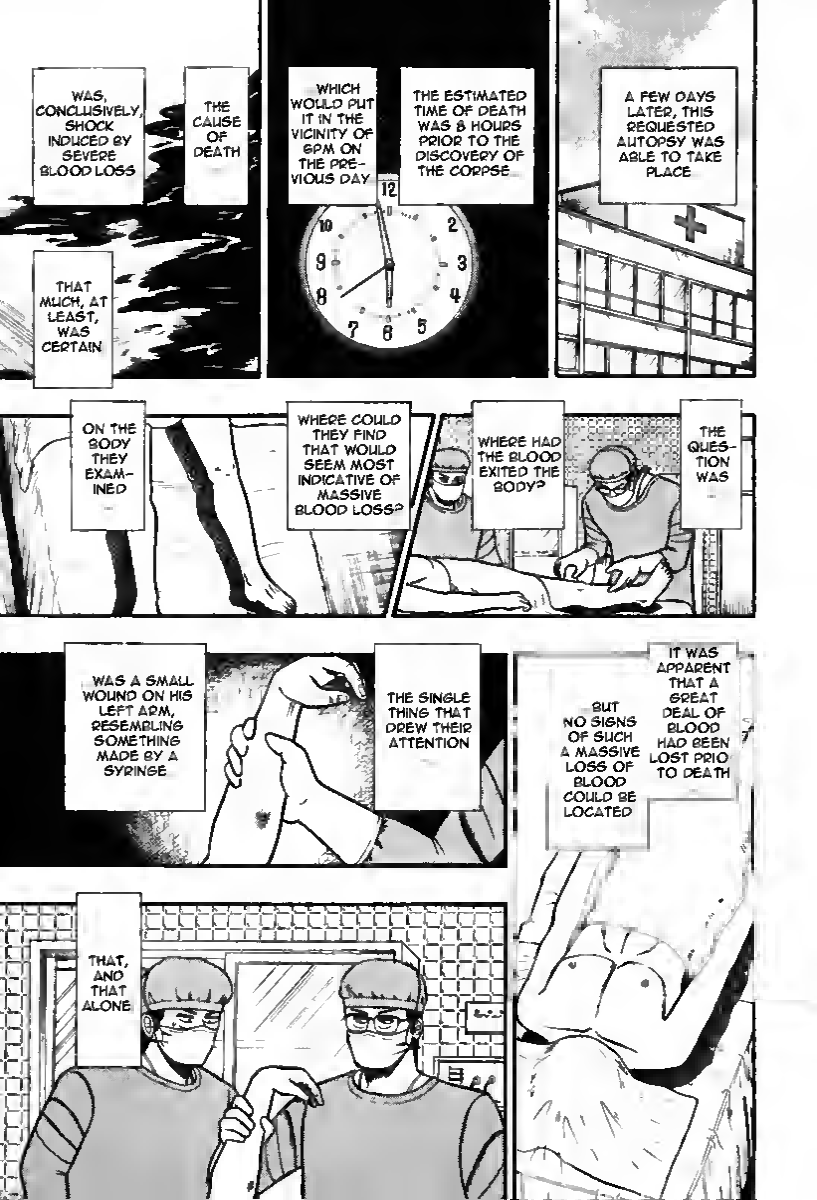
GH-
....
huhhh
!!
....
huhhh
!!!
....
ザーッ
GYAAA
AAAAA
AAAUUU
UUUGG
GGHH
HHH
!!!!!!
THIS MARKED THE BEGIN-NING
...

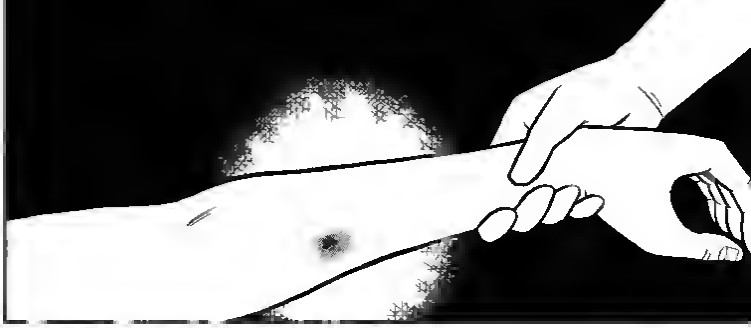
MARKED THE LAUNCHING POINT OF THE MADMAN'S RAMPAGE.
THIS EXTRA-ORDINARILY BIZARRE HAPPENING ...

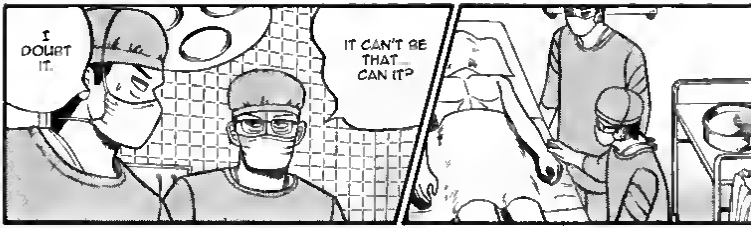

...DID NOT APPEAR TO HAVE SUSTAINED ANY GRAVE INJURIES
THE MAN FOUND BURIED BENEATH THE SOIL THAT DAY ...

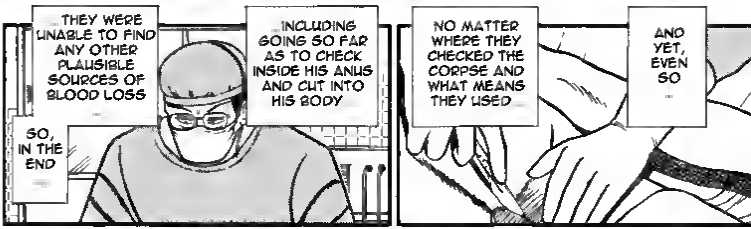
...THE POLICE RUSHED TO THE SCENE OF THE CRIME TO INVESTI-GATE.
THE VERY NEXT MORNING AFTER ASANUMA REPORTED WHAT HE SAW...

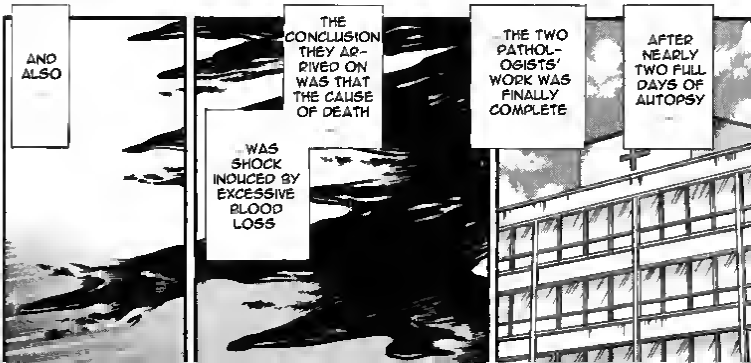

...IT WAS DECIDED NECESSARY TO PERFORM AN AUTOPSY ON THE BODY.
AND WITHOUT THE ABILITY TO DISCERN THE CAUSE OF DEATH FROM SUCH THINGS AS WOUNDS ...

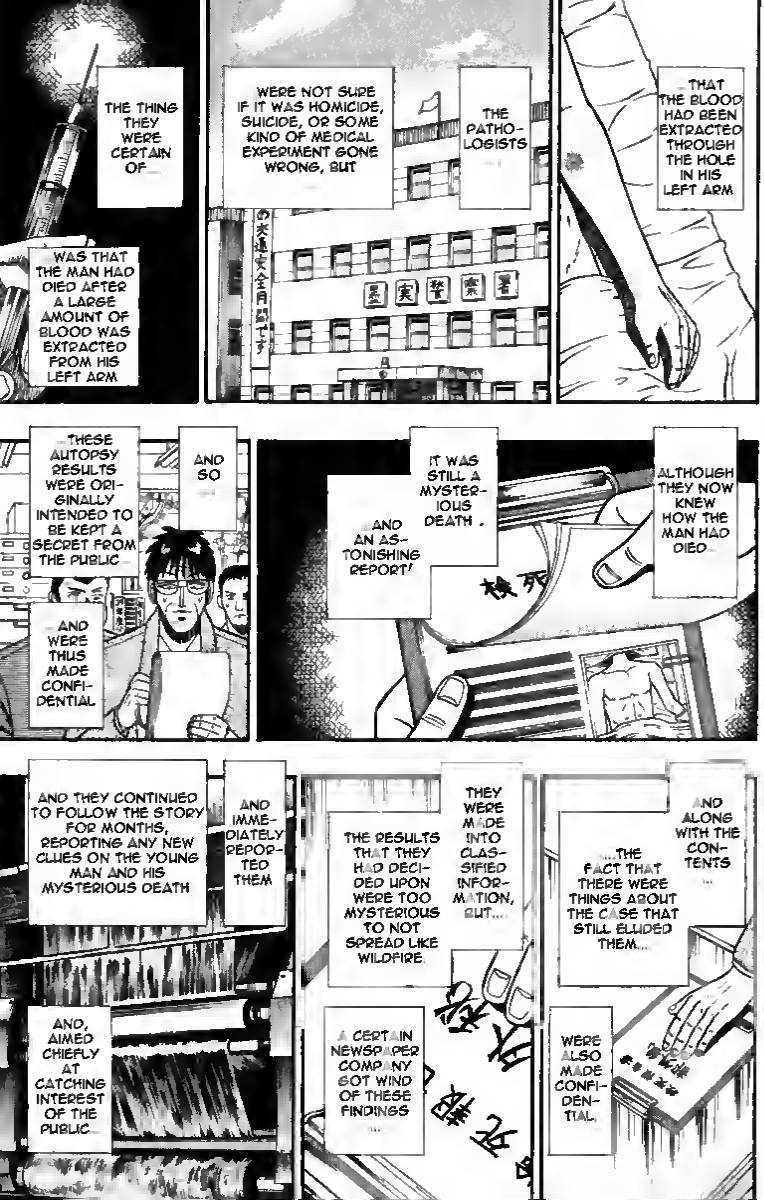

WAS, CONCLUSIVELY, SHOCK INDUCED BY SEVERE BLOOD LOSS
THE CAUSE OF DEATH
THAT MUCH, AT LEAST, WAS CERTAIN
WHICH WOULD PUT IT IN THE VICINITY OF 6PM ON THE PREVIOUS DAY
THE ESTIMATED TIME OF DEATH WAS 8 HOURS PRIOR TO THE DISCOVERY OF THE CORPSE
A FEW DAYS LATER, THIS REQUESTED AUTOPSY WAS ABLE TO TAKE PLACE
ON THE BODY THEY EXAMINED
WHERE COULD THEY FIND THAT WOULD SEEM MOST INDICATIVE OF MASSIVE BLOOD LOSS?
WHERE HAD THE BLOOD EXITED THE BODY?
THE QUESTION WAS
WAS A SMALL WOUND ON HIS LEFT ARM, RESEMBLING SOMETHING MADE BY A SYRINGE
THE SINGLE THING THAT DREW THEIR ATTENTION
BUT NO SIGNS OF SUCH A MASSIVE LOSS OF BLOOD COULD BE LOCATED
IT WAS APPARENT THAT A GREAT DEAL OF BLOOD HAD BEEN LOST PRIO TO DEATH
THAT, AND THAT ALONE




I DOUBT IT.
IT CAN'T BE THAT... CAN IT?


THEY WERE UNABLE TO FIND ANY OTHER PLAUSIBLE SOURCES OF BLOOD LOSS...
...INCLUDING GOING SO FAR AS TO CHECK INSIDE HIS ANUS AND CUT INTO HIS BODY
SO, IN THE END...
NO MATTER WHERE THEY CHECKED THE CORPSE AND WHAT MEANS THEY USED...
AND YET, EVEN SO...

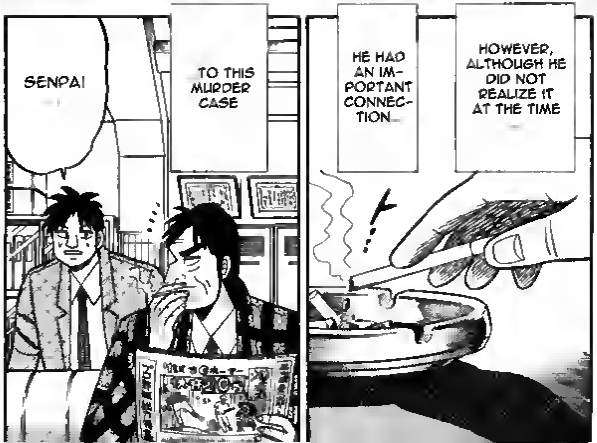

AND ALSO...
THE CONCLUSION THEY ARRIVED ON WAS THAT THE CAUSE OF DEATH...
...WAS SHOCK INDUCED BY EXCESSIVE BLOOD LOSS
...THE TWO PATHOLOGISTS' WORK WAS FINALLY COMPLETE
AFTER NEARLY TWO FULL DAYS OF AUTOPSY...


THE THING THEY WERE CERTAIN OF...
WAS THAT THE MAN HAD DIED AFTER A LARGE AMOUNT OF BLOOD WAS EXTRACTED FROM HIS LEFT ARM
WERE NOT SURE IF IT WAS HOMICIDE, SUICIDE, OR SOME KIND OF MEDICAL EXPERIMENT GONE WRONG, BUT
THE PATHOLOGISTS
...THAT THE BLOOD HAD BEEN EXTRACTED THROUGH THE HOLE IN HIS LEFT ARM
...THESE AUTOPSY RESULTS WERE ORIGINALLY INTENDED TO BE KEPT A SECRET FROM THE PUBLIC
AND SO
...AND WERE THUS MADE CONFIDENTIAL
...AND AN ASTONISHING REPORT!
IT WAS STILL A MYSTERIOUS DEATH.
ALTHOUGH THEY NOW KNEW HOW THE MAN HAD DIED...
AND THEY CONTINUED TO FOLLOW THE STORY FOR MONTHS, REPORTING ANY NEW CLUES ON THE YOUNG MAN AND HIS MYSTERIOUS DEATH
AND IMMEDIATELY REPORTED THEM
AND, AIMED CHIEFLY AT CATCHING INTEREST OF THE PUBLIC...
THE RESULTS THAT THEY HAD DECIDED UPON WERE TOO MYSTERIOUS TO NOT SPREAD LIKE WILDFIRE.
THEY WERE MADE INTO CLASSIFIED INFORMATION, BUT....
A CERTAIN NEWSPAPER COMPANY GOT WIND OF THESE FINDINGS
...THE FACT THAT THERE WERE THINGS ABOUT THE CASE THAT STILL ELUDED THEM...
AND ALONG WITH THE CONTENTS
WERE ALSO MADE CONFIDENTIAL.

THE DEATH BECAME KNOWN ...

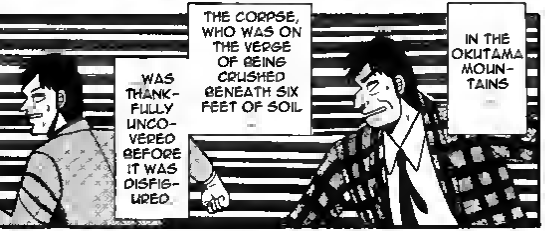
AS THE VAMPIRE MURDER ...

YASUOKA DID NOT SEEM TO SHOW ANY SIGNS OF INTEREST IN THE CASE.
WHEN THE NEWS FIRST BEGAN TO SPREAD
POLICE DETECTIVE YASUOKA



EXCUSE ME, SIR
HMM?

WHA ...?!

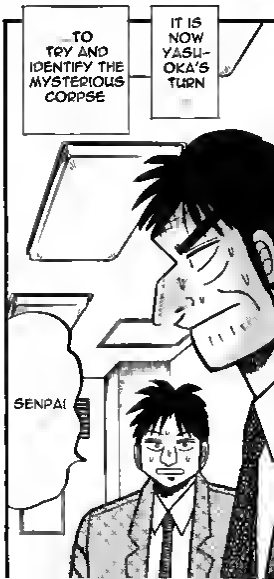

IN THE OKUTAMA MOUN-TAINS
THE CORPSE, WHO WAS ON THE VERGE OF BEING CRUSHED BENEATH SIX FEET OF SOIL
WAS THANK-FULLY UNCO-VERED BEFORE IT WAS DISFIG-URED.

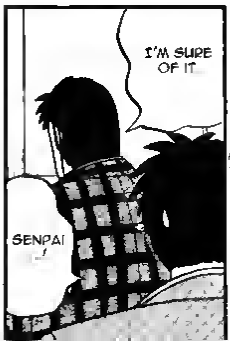
PLEASE COME WITH ME RIGHT AWAY, SIR...
Y...
YEAH ...

AND SO

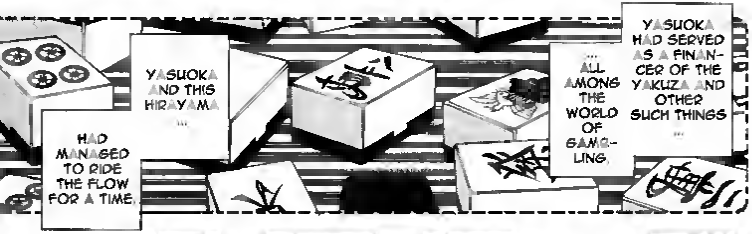
THE INVES-TIGATION SQUAD HAD TAKEN TURNS RACKING THEIR BRAINS ...
AND THUS, HE COULD BE EASILY REC-OGNIZED BY SOMEONE WHO KNEW HIM...

WHAT DO YOU THINK—?

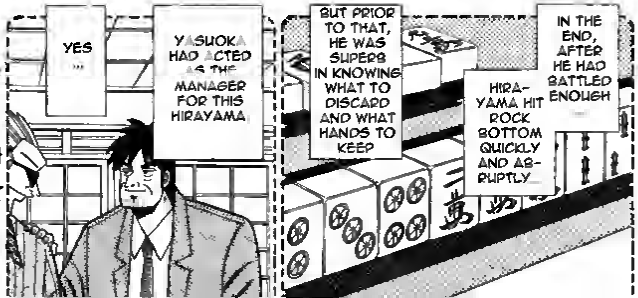

IT IS NOW YASU-OKA'S TURN
...TO TRY AND IDENTIFY THE MYSTERIOUS CORPSE
SENPAI


I'M SURE OF IT
SENPAI!

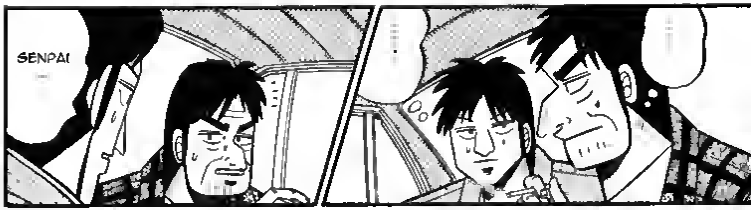
THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT IT
THIS MAN IS HIRAYAMA YUKIO
HUH—?


YASUOKA AND THIS HIRAYAMA ...
HAD MANAGED TO RIDE THE FLOW FOR A TIME.
... ALL AMONG THE WORLD OF GAMB-LING.
YASUOKA HAD SERVED AS A FINAN-CIER OF THE YAKUZA AND OTHER SUCH THINGS ...

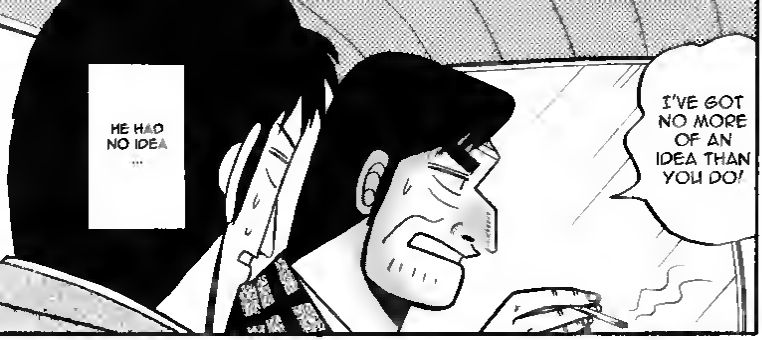
THE MAN FOUND BURIED BENEATH THE SOIL ON THAT NIGHT...


YES ...
YASUOKA HAD ACTED AS THE MANAGER FOR THIS HIRAYAMA.
BUT PRIOR TO THAT, HE WAS SUPERB IN KNOWING WHAT TO DISCARD AND WHAT HANDS TO KEEP.
HIRA-YAMA HIT ROCK BOTTOM QUICKLY AND AB-RUPTLY...
IN THE END, AFTER HE HAD BATTLED ENOUGH ...

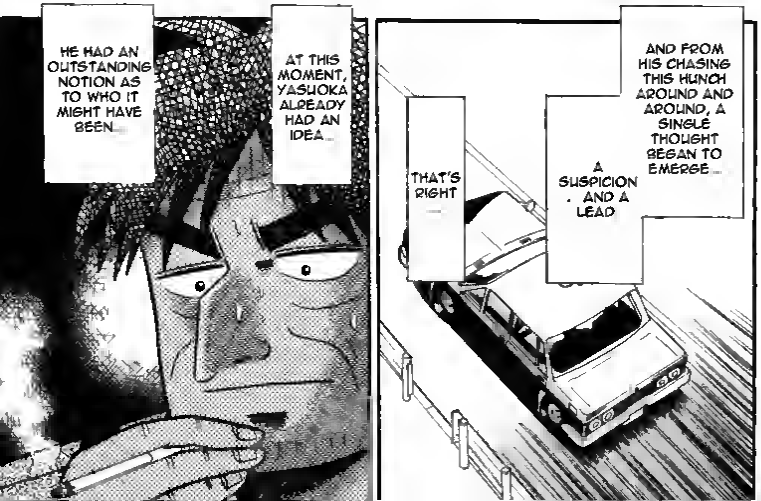
...WAS NONE OTHER THAN THE FAKE AKAGI!


SENPAI
...
...

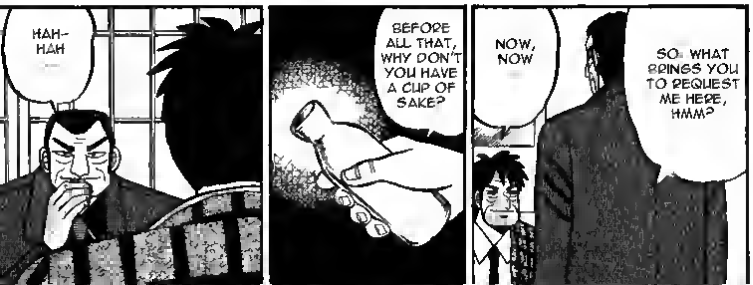
HOW COULD I ?!
OF COURSE I DON'T HAVE ANY IDEA ABOUT THAT!
WHOA, WHOA, WHOA!
DO YOU HAVE SOME IDEA... OF WHY THAT MAN WAS KILLED...?
HUH?
WHAT ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT, SENPAI?


HE HAD NO IDEA ...
I'VE GOT NO MORE OF AN IDEA THAN YOU DO!

IN TRUTH, AT THE MOMENT ...
YASUOKA HAD BEEN CHASING AROUND A HUNCH IN THE BACK OF HIS MIND
AND WHILE THAT WAS WHAT HE SAID ...
BY SIMPLY STATING THAT HE HAD NO FURTHER CLUES AS TO WHAT MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED TO THAT MAN
AT THAT TIME, HE FENDED OFF HIS COLLEAGUE

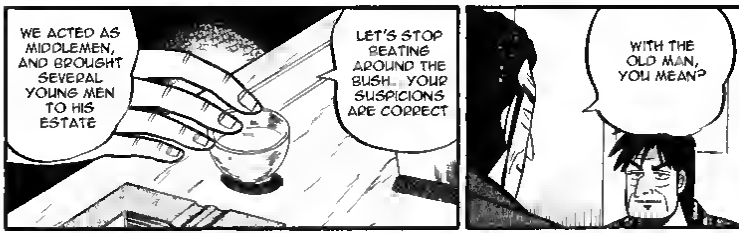

HE HAD AN OUTSTANDING NOTION AS TO WHO IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN...
AT THIS MOMENT, YASUOKA ALREADY HAD AN IDEA...
THAT'S RIGHT ...
A SUSPICION . AND A LEAD
AND FROM HIS CHASING THIS HUNCH AROUND AND AROUND, A SINGLE THOUGHT BEGAN TO EMERGE...

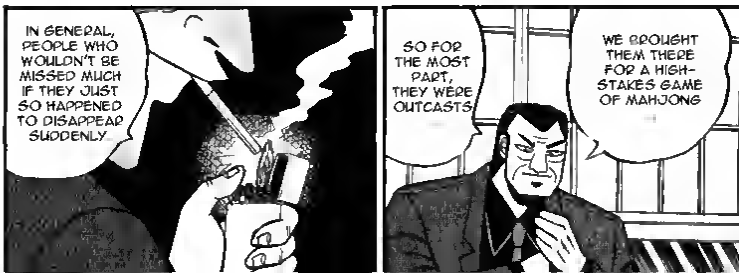
HE HAD A SUSPICION AS TO WHO THIS BIZARRE MURDERER WAS!



YOU USED A PHONE, DIDN'T YOU?
TO TALK WITH HIM
SO, THEN
...

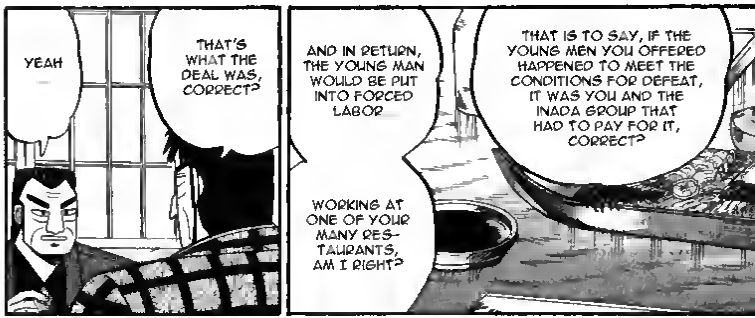
HMM ...
.....


WE ACTED AS MIDDLEMEN, AND BROUGHT SEVERAL YOUNG MEN TO HIS ESTATE
LET'S STOP BEATING AROUND THE BUSH... YOUR SUSPICIONS ARE CORRECT
WITH THE OLD MAN, YOU MEAN?


IN GENERAL, PEOPLE WHO WOULDN'T BE MISSED MUCH IF THEY JUST SO HAPPENED TO DISAPPEAR SUDDENLY
SO FOR THE MOST PART, THEY WERE OUTCASTS
WE BROUGHT THEM THERE FOR A HIGH-STAKES GAME OF MAHJONG

THE KNOW-LEDGE WE WERE GIVEN
DID NOT EXTEND VERY FAR BEYOND THE REWARD FOR A VICTORY
SHOULD THE YOUNG MAN WE CHOSE HAPPEN TO WIN THE GAME OF MAHJONG, THE OLD MAN WOULD REWARD HIM WITH A LARGE AMOUNT OF MONEY.
THAT MUCH WAS CLEAR, BUT...
NATU-RALLY, AS WAS IN THE CON-TRACT THEY SIGNED...
SO TO KEEP THE OLD MAN'S TEMPER IN CHECK,
WE TRIED TO MAKE THE SAC-RIFICES WE OFFERED TO HIM AS WORTHWHILE AS WE COULD
WELL, WE LIKE TO BE AS THOROUGH AS POS-SIBLE...
MADE IT TRICKY TO MAINTAIN YOUR COM-POSURE...
EVEN IF YOU WERE CONFI-DENT IN YOUR GAME TO BEGIN WITH
WITH THEM, THAT GAME OF MAH-JONG
AND THERE WERE SOME SPECIAL RULES AS WELL.
THE WAGER WAS QUITE HIGH FOR A SIMPLE GAMBLE SUCH AS THAT...
IT'S A GAME OF MAHJONG THAT POOR PEOPLE COULD NEVER HOPE TO OVERCOME...
MAYBE HE GOT TIRED OF HIS OWN LITTLE GAME, HMM?
ALTHOUGH, AS OF RECENT, THE OLD MAN HASN'T BEEN ASKING US FOR ANY MORE SACRIFICES...
WAS TRULY UNMER-CIFAL.
IN THE END, THAT MAN'S GAME OF MAHJONG, ONE WITH DANGER EVER LOOMING CLOSE BEHIND...
YOU WOULD NEED TO HAVE A STRONG FINANCIAL BACKBONE TO WIN.

I SUPPOSE HE JUST LOST INTEREST.
YOU REALLY THINK SO?
...?
TO FOLLOW WHAT YOU JUST SAID, OHGI-SAN
IT WAS YOUR JOB TO DEAL WITH WHAT HAPPENED TO THE YOUNG MEN AFTERWARDS, CORRECT?


THAT IS TO SAY, IF THE YOUNG MEN YOU OFFERED HAPPENED TO MEET THE CONDITIONS FOR DEFEAT, IT WAS YOU AND THE INADA GROUP THAT HAD TO PAY FOR IT, CORRECT?
AND IN RETURN, THE YOUNG MAN WOULD BE PUT INTO FORCED LABOR
WORKING AT ONE OF YOUR MANY RESTAURANTS, AM I RIGHT?
THAT'S WHAT THE DEAL WAS, CORRECT?
YEAH

SO, THEN, WHEN DID THIS OLD MAN YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT STOP CALLING YOU UP FOR MORE PEOPLE TO PLAY WITH?
FOUR, MAYBE FIVE MONTHS AGO?
JUST AS I THOUGHT

REPORTS...?
TO CLARIFY
...WHEN REPORTS OF MISSING YOUTHS STARTED TO POUR IN
HUH...?
THAT'S RIGHT AROUND THE TIME THAT IT HAPPENED
THAT WOULD MATCH UP PERFECTLY
JUST AS YOU THOUGHT...?

TO THE POINT WHERE HE HAD TRANSFORMED INTO A MAN-EATING MONSTER.
THE OLD MAN'S PASSTIME INTENSIFIED MORE AND MORE...

IT GREW BEYOND WHAT HE COULD REASONABLY EXPECT YOU TO HELP WITH
AND THOUGH YOU AND YOUR GROUP HAD BEEN A GREAT HELP TO HIM IN HIS VICES
AND MORE THAN THAT, HE BEGAN TO CRAVE THEIR DESTRUC-TION
THE YOUNG MEN WHO CHASED AFTER HIS HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF YEN MET ONLY RUIN

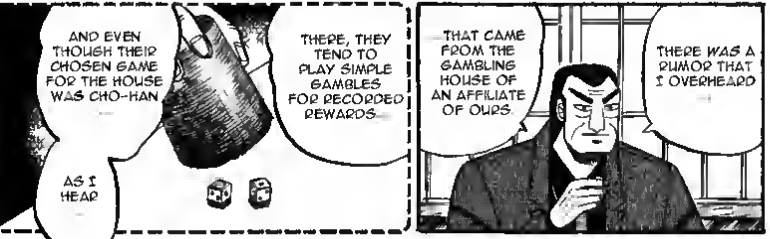
NO
THIS OLD MAN...
OHGI-SAN...
NO WAY...?!
URGH...!!
ONE OF HIS VICTIMS WAS RECENTLY FOUND DEAD IN THE TAMA MOUNTAIN REGION.

WITH A MONSTER OF OUR OWN!
THIS MONSTER ...
I WAS THINKING IT WOULD BE THE RIGHT THING IF WE TOOK HIM DOWN...
MON-STER ?
YES.
WE'LL PUT HIM UP AGAINST A MONSTER THAT NO ONE CAN DEFEAT ...
AKAGI SHIGERU!

CHAPTER 58 - FIRE POWER
第58話 火力

AKAGI SHIGERU WILL FIGHT FOR US!

CHO-HAN: A TRADITIONAL JAPANESE GAMBLING GAME WHERE PLAYERS BET ON WHETHER THE ADDED TOTAL OF TWO DICE WILL BE ODD OR EVEN, ORGANIZED SIMILAR TO MODERN-DAY CRAPS


AND EVEN THOUGH THEIR CHOSEN GAME FOR THE HOUSE WAS CHO-HAN
AS I HEAR
THERE, THEY TEND TO PLAY SIMPLE GAMBLES FOR RECORDED REWARDS

THAT'S THE RUMOR
HE ACCEPTS SOME PRETTY CRAZY GAMBLES WITH OPEN ARMS, BUT HE DOESN'T SEEM TO HAVE ANY BACKUP
HE LOOKS LIKE SOME KID OFF THE STREET, AND SEEMS TO BE AROUND 20 YEARS OLD OR SO

I HAVEN'T HEARD OF ANY GANGS WITH REP PLAYERS AT ALL RESEMBLING THE KIND OF GAMEPLAY HE'S KNOWN FOR
EVEN WITH ALL OF MY RESOR-CES

.....
BUT I'D SAY IT'S WORTH A TRY, AT THE LEAST

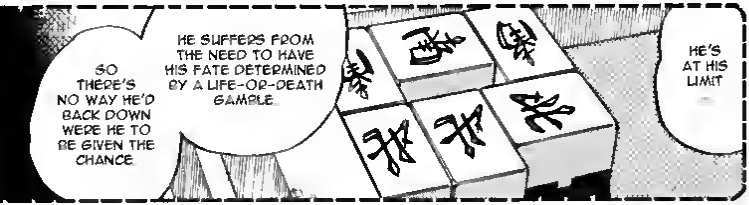
I HAVE TO ADMIT, I'M A BIT SKEPTICAL ABOUT THAT
HAH-HAH

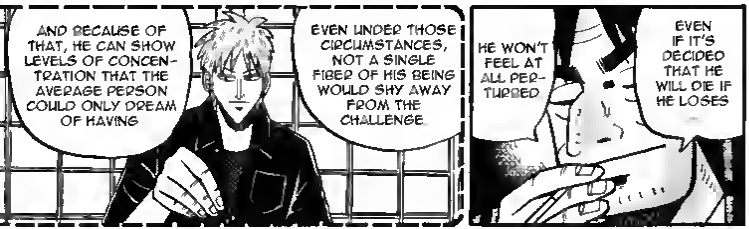
THAT'S THEIR SCHEDULE.
THEIR GAMBLING HOUSE IS IN BUSINESS ON THE SECOND AND FOURTH SATURDAYS OF EVERY MONTH
THE KURATA GROUP, IN CHIBA
SO, THEN, WHICH ASSOCIATE IS THIS, EXACTLY?

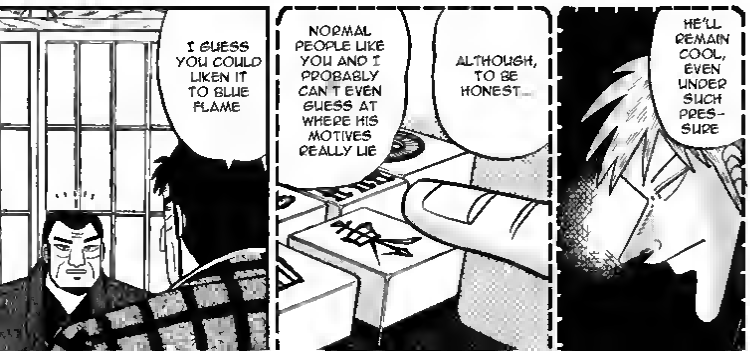
IF WHAT YOU SAID IS TRUE...
BUT, YASUOKA-SAN ...
OF COURSE, THERE'S NOT A PROBLEM THERE.
ALL RIGHT, CAN YOU TAKE ME THERE?
IF THAT WAS THE OLD MAN'S DOING, THEN ...
ABOUT THE BODY THAT THEY FOUND IN THE TAMA MOUNTAINS
THE DEAD BODY JUST ADDS TO OUR CERTAINTY ON THAT POINT.
THAT'S AN UNDENIABLE TRUTH, FAR FROM A MERE BLUFF!
IT'S THE MOST DANGER-OUS KIND OF MAH-JONG.
IF AKAGI LOSES, HE WILL DIE!
ANY YOUNG PERSON WHO GOES UP AGAINST HIM
WILL BE LITERALLY RISKING THEIR LIFE IN A GAME OF MAHJONG!

IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW MANY HIGH-STAKES GAMBLES THIS AKAGI HAS TAKEN PART IN...
HE'LL STILL FALL VICTIM TO HOMICIDE SHOULD HE LOSE THIS ONE GAME!
WE'RE TALKING ABOUT AN OLD MAN WHO HAS NEVER KNOWN REAL DEFEAT, YOU KNOW...
IS HE REALLY WILLING TO RISK HIS LIFE SO EASILY?
THIS AKAGI SHIGERU YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT
F...
IS THAT ALL?
HAH-HAH
IF HE'S JUST A NORMAL PERSON LIKE THE REST OF THEM, THERE'S NO WAY HE CAN HANDLE IT!
THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT HIM THAT GOES FAR BEYOND THAT
I KNOW AKAGI, AND IF THERE'S ONE THING THAT HE CAN NEVER BE IN HIS WHOLE LIFE, IT'S A "NORMAL PERSON"
OHGI-SAN
BUT IN THIS CASE, THAT'S NOT A PROBLEM
I UNDERSTAND WHERE YOUR CONCERN IS COMING FROM

AND I CAN ONLY IMAGINE THAT HE'S SIMPLY GROWN TIRED OF LIVING
I'VE BEEN TRYING TO PIN IT DOWN FOR A WHILE, NOW
YOU HEARD ME
FAR BEYOND BEING NORMAL ?


SO THERE'S NO WAY HE'D BACK DOWN WERE HE TO BE GIVEN THE CHANCE
HE SUFFERS FROM THE NEED TO HAVE HIS FATE DETERMINED BY A LIFE-OR-DEATH GAMBLE
HE'S AT HIS LIMIT

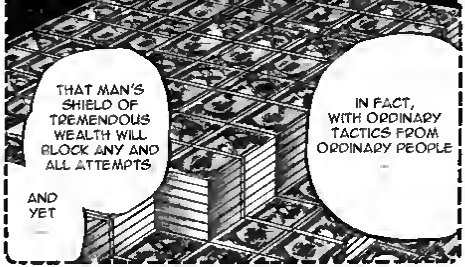

AND BECAUSE OF THAT, HE CAN SHOW LEVELS OF CONCENTRATION THAT THE AVERAGE PERSON COULD ONLY DREAM OF HAVING
EVEN UNDER THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES, NOT A SINGLE FIBER OF HIS BEING WOULD SHY AWAY FROM THE CHALLENGE
HE WON'T FEEL AT ALL PERTURBED
EVEN IF IT'S DECIDED THAT HE WILL DIE IF HE LOSES

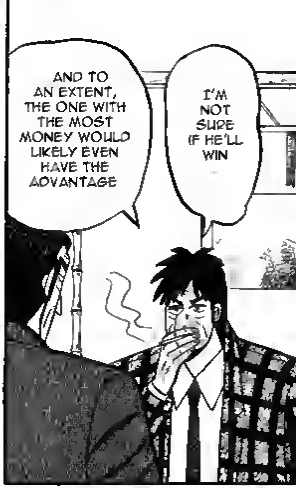

I GUESS YOU COULD LIKEN IT TO BLUE FLAME
NORMAL PEOPLE LIKE YOU AND I PROBABLY CAN'T EVEN GUESS AT WHERE HIS MOTIVES REALLY LIE
ALTHOUGH, TO BE HONEST...
HE'LL REMAIN COOL, EVEN UNDER SUCH PRESSURE

HE'S A LONG WAY FROM THAT PRIMITIVE LEVEL OF FIRE...
HIS FLAME CAN REACH EXTREMELY HIGH TEMPERATURES, AND TURN BLUE!
ORDINARY PEOPLE LIKE YOU AND ME, NO MATTER HOW HARD WE CONCENTRATE OR WHAT WE'RE DOING, CAN NEVER GET OUR FLAMES BURNING AT A HIGHER TEMPERATURE THAN IT TAKES TO GET A RED OR YELLOW FLAME.
ON THE OTHER HAND...
EVEN RAW IRON IS SPLIT UP BY SUCH AN EXTREME LEVEL OF HEAT!
IF WE GET HIM TO FIGHT...
...THEN THE OLD MAN WILL BURN DOWN TO NOTHING UP AGAINST THAT LEVEL OF SHEER FIRE POWER!
...CAN REALLY DRIVE THE OLD MAN INTO A CORNER!
AKAGI...
AND IN THAT CASE...
HAH-HAH...
ONLY ONE OF THEM CAN REMAIN
EVEN THAT MADMAN WOULD CATCH A FEVER UP AGAINST THAT KIND OF HEAT

SO YOU'RE SAYING THAT AKAGI REALLY WILL DEFEAT THE OLD MAN ...?!
IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE GETTING AT...?!

THERE'S NO TELLING IF AKAGI CAN WIN OR NOT BEFORE IT HAPPENS
SINCE THE RULES FOR THE GAME ARE UNIQUE...
I CAN'T SAY I'M TOTALLY SURE ABOUT IT.
NO


THAT MAN'S SHIELD OF TREMENDOUS WEALTH WILL BLOCK ANY AND ALL ATTEMPTS.
AND YET
IN FACT, WITH ORDINARY TACTICS FROM ORDINARY PEOPLE


AND TO AN EXTENT, THE ONE WITH THE MOST MONEY WOULD LIKELY EVEN HAVE THE ADVANTAGE
I'M NOT SURE IF HE'LL WIN

EVEN THAT IRON SHIELD MIGHT CRUMBLE APART!
AGAINST AKAGI'S FIRE, HOTTER THAN ANY OTHER KIND,

HE STILL MIGHT JUST COME OUT ON TOP!
...EVEN IF THE RULES ARE MADE SO THAT HE'S AT A MOUNTAINOUS DISADVANTAGE,

IF IT'S AKAGI SHIGERU PLAYING

THAT'S RIGHT.
ALL OF THEM ?!

THEN ALL OF THE OLD MAN'S WORLDLY POSESSIONS WILL BE HIS FOR THE TAKING!
AND IF HE DOES HAPPEN TO WIN

AS "KYOUSEI" GREW, HE WAS ABLE TO SAVE AND SAVE HIS MONEY OVER THE YEARS
HE WAS A PIONEER IN THE MANAGE-MENT OF CONSULTANCY FIRMS
...AND BY FINDING A WAY TO DODGE HIS TAXES TIME AND TIME AGAIN...
AFTER RETIRING FROM THE POLICE FORCE, THE OLD MAN REVIVED HIS BOUNTIFUL ENTERPRISE

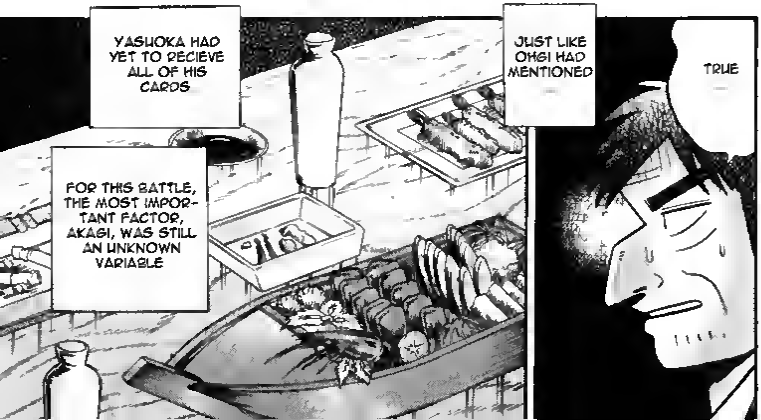
THEN AKAGI, MYSELF
IF HE WINS THE GAME AGAINST THE OLD MAN
THIS 500 MILLION IN SHOWA 40 (1965) EQUATES TO ABOUT 5 BIL-LION TODAY
HIS FORTUNE TODAY REACHES SOMEWHERE BETWEEN 500 MILLION AND A BILLION YEN

AKAGI SHOULD BE ABLE TO WIN...
I'LL DO WHATEVER IS NEEDED TO PREPARE
BUT IF IT HAPPENS THAT THE OLD MAN DOES, INSTEAD
IN ORDER TO GET THIS BATTLE ON ITS FEET
...WE'LL MOST DEFINITELY NEED TO HAVE YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH THE OLD MAN!
AND ALSO YOU, OHGI-SAN
...WILL GET EQUAL CUTS OF THE MONEY!

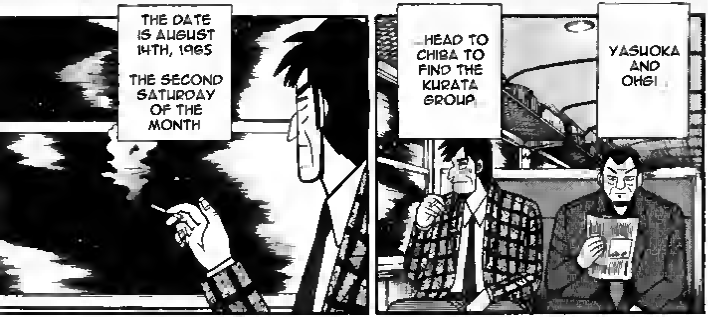
THE OLD MAN HAS A WHOLE PRIVATE FORCE WORKING FOR HIM, SO IT'S CRITICAL THAT WE HAVE A GROUP, AS WELL
WE DON'T KNOW HOW VIOLENT THE OLD MAN MIGHT GET IF HE STARTS LOSING
IF WE DON'T HAVE ANY BACKUP, THE WHOLE THING WILL BE MEANINGLESS
THE CHANCE OF SOMETHING GOING WRONG IS QUITE HIGH
YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW IF AKAGI CAN WIN OR NOT...?
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU SAYING?
SO, OHSI-SAN, IF YOU CAN GET THE INADA GROUP TO HELP US OUT WITH THIS, THEN-
ISN'T THAT HOW IT IS?
WE DON'T KNOW IF HE REALLY IS AKAGI OR NOT!
AND MORE THAN THAT, THE CHIBA THING IS STILL JUST A RUMOR.
HERE'S WHAT I'LL SAY
HUHHHHH...
YEAH
IF HE'S NOT, ALL OF THIS PREPAR-ATION WILL HAVE BEEN WAS-TED!

THAT'S ALL
ANYTHING WE TALK ABOUT BEFORE THEN IS NOTHING MORE THAN IDLE GOSSIP
WHETHER OR NOT I END UP AGREEING TO THIS
I WON'T MAKE MY DECISON UNTIL AFTER WE'VE DISCOVERED IF THE MAN REALLY IS AKAGI

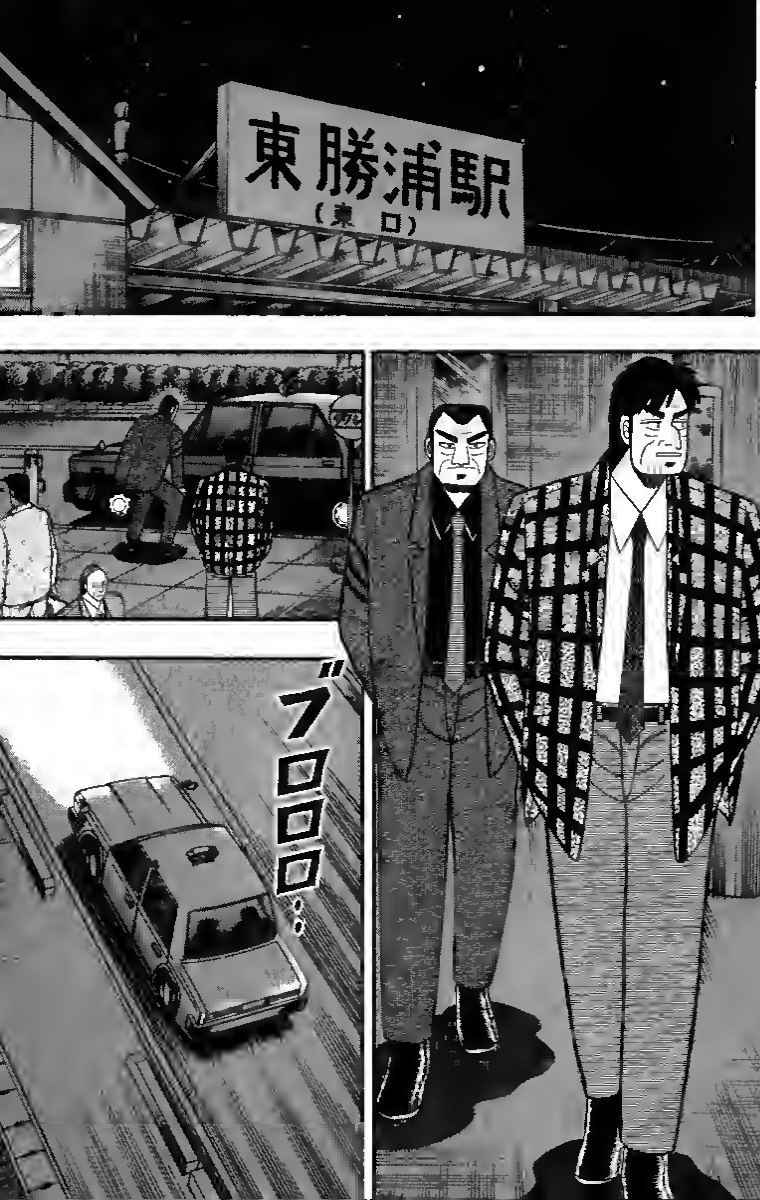
ooO


YASUOKA HAD YET TO RECIEVE ALL OF HIS CARDS
FOR THIS BATTLE, THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR, AKAGI, WAS STILL AN UNKNOWN VARIABLE
JUST LIKE OHSI HAD MENTIONED
TRUE

FIRST, HE HAD TO FIND OUT WHAT HE HAD TO WORK WITH!

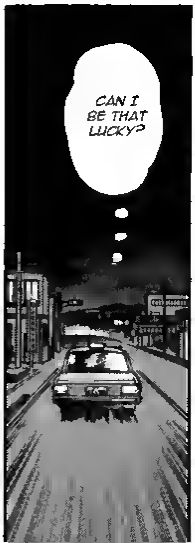


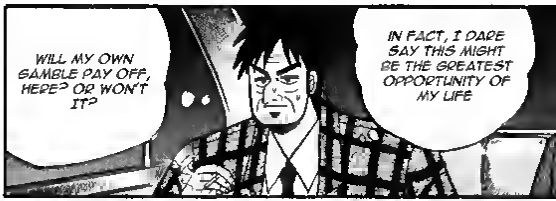
IF IT TURNS OUT NOT TO BE AKAGI, ALL OF YASUOKA'S PREPARATION WILL HAVE BEEN FOR NOTHING...
...THE MYSTERIOUS MAN WHO MAY OR MAY NOT BE AKAGI HAD WON...
THAT MANY TIMES TO NOW, WHENEVER THE GAMBLING HOUSE OPENED...
IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING...


東勝浦駅
（東口）
ブロロロ…

さみやビル
不動産
ダイトウ

THIS IS VERY FORTU-NATE


CAN I BE THAT LUCKY?

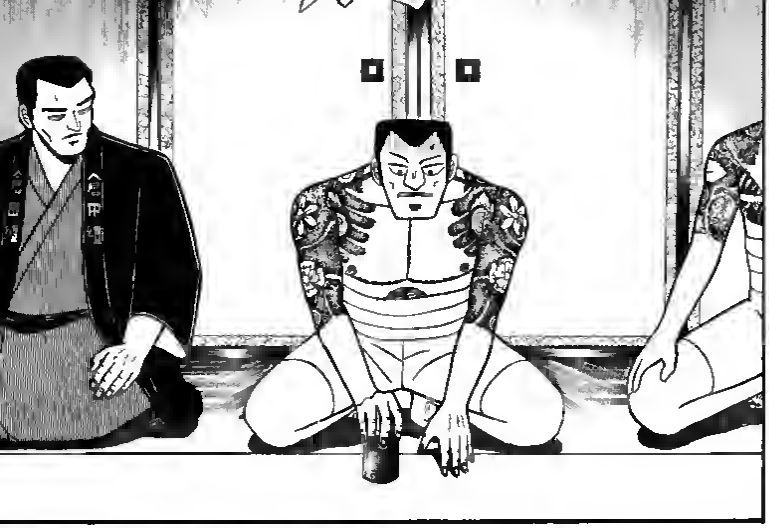

WILL MY OWN GAMBLE PAY OFF, HERE? OR WON'T IT?
IN FACT, I DARE SAY THIS MIGHT BE THE GREATEST OPPORTUNITY OF MY LIFE

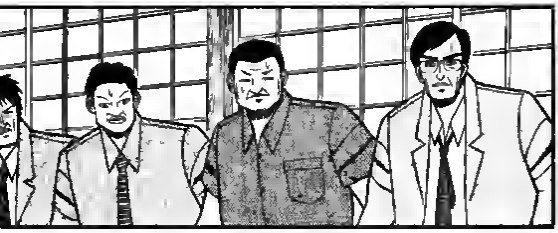
WILL I ENCOUNTER THE LEGEN-DARY MAN ...THE GENIUS, AKAGI, BY SHEER CHANCE, AGAIN?

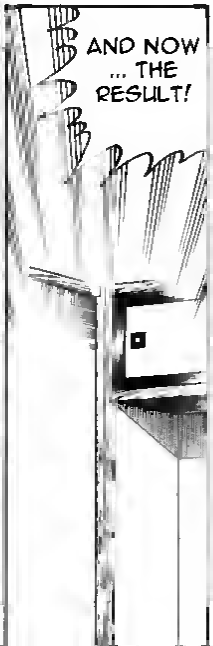
HERE, ONCE AGAIN

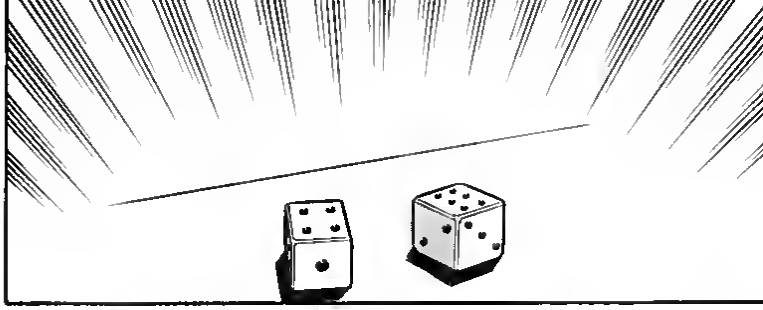
MEAN-WHILE, AT THE KURATA HOUSE
ARE YOU BETTING ODD?!
OR WILL IT BE EVEN ?!
ざわ…
ざわ…
WHICH WILL IT BE?
EVEN.

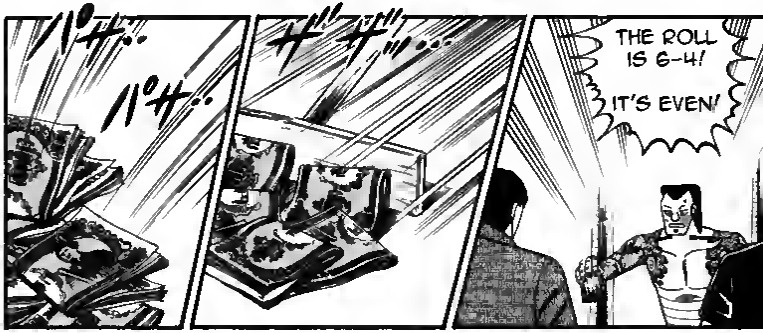
ざわ..
ざわ..
ざわ..
THE BETS HAVE BEEN MADE!






AND NOW ... THE RESULT!




ハサ…
ハサ…
ガ…ガ…
THE ROLL IS 6-4!
IT'S EVEN!

KH //

CHO-HAN_
ガタ!
ガタ…

...AND ALL THE CUSTOMERS BATTLE IT OUT AMONGST THEMSELVES.
ONE SIMPLY BETS ON THE OUTCOME OF THE DICE BETWEEN EVEN AND ODD...
ガク...
...IS NOT A GAME ABOUT THE INDIVIDUAL PERSON'S STRUGGLE AGAINST THE HOUSE.
...AND CONSEQUENTLY DO NOT GENERALLY CARE WHICH OF THEIR CUSTOMERS ENDS UP WINNING IN A GIVEN ROLL.
IT IS, OF COURSE, FUNDAMENTAL THAT THEY DO NOT TAKE PART IN THE GAME, THEMSELVES.
HOWEVER...
USUALLY ONLY 5-10% OF THE WINNINGS
THE ORGANIZERS OF THE GAME TAKE A SMALL CUT OF THE WINNINGS FOR THEMSELVES
INEVITABLY, IN THE FACE OF THAT, LARGE AMOUNTS OF OTHER GUESTS WILL END UP GOING BROKE
AND ONCE THAT HAPPENS, THE GUESTS TEND TO LEAVE
WHEN ALL OF THE WINS ARE FOCUSED ON A SINGLE PATRON...
THE EVENT OF A SINGLE GUEST MAKING AN ABSURD AMOUNT OF VICTORIES BY HIMSELF...
...IS NOT AT ALL DESIRABLE.

...HAS BECOME VERY CLOSELY WATCHED BY THE ORGANIZERS
IN REALITY, THIS YOUNG MAN...
THIS IS BECAUSE HE IS LOSING THEM CUSTOMERS
THE HOUSE ENDS UP PROFITING LESS
AND THE FEWER GUESTS THERE ARE, THE LOWER THE ORGANIZER'S FEE GETS
AND NOW, THE RESULT ...!!
HAS AROUND 50% OF THE GUESTS THAT IT USUALLY DOES
AT PRESENT, THE GAMBLING HOUSE
THE KURATA GROUP, TOO, IS BEGINNING TO SHOW SOME SIGNS OF DISCOMFORT
EVEN THEY ARE APPROACHING THEIR LIMIT
1-3.. EVEN ...!!
AND ONCE AGAIN, THEIR EARNINGS ARE VERY INSIGNIFICANT
SO FOR THEM, THIS IS A VERY SERIOUS MATTER
THE KURATA GROUP MAKES MOST OF THEIR INCOME FROM THE ORGANIZERS' FEE

AND WHILE THEY WERE, THE YOUNG MAN'S WINNINGS CONTINUED TO PILE UP IN FRONT OF HIM.
AND WHILE THEY DON'T EXACTLY SAY IT OUT LOUD,
"YOU'RE A NUISANCE ... GET OUT OF HERE!" IS WHAT THEY ARE THINKING.
THOSE THOUGHTS ARE WRITTEN ON THEIR FACES.
HE COULD LOSE A GOOD PART OF HIS MONEY AT ANY TIME
THIS RAZOR-SHARP ANIMOSITY SHOWED IN HIS STARE
...BUT HIS EYES SHOWED NO SUCH UNEASINESS.
AND MORE THAN THAT, HIS SENSES WERE SHARP AS A KNIFE.
HE HAD ABSOLUTELY NO BACKUP
IT WOULD SEEM AS THOUGH THIS MAN HAD SENSES THAT DEFY THE HUMAN MIND'S CAPACITY FOR UNDERSTANDING
YES
THERE ARE ONLY A CHOSEN FEW WHO ARE LIKE THAT.

THE YOUNG MAN IS, INDEED, AKAGI SHIGERU!

CHAPTER 59 - VIOLENCE

第59話 暴挙

IT IS AUGUST 14TH, AT THE KURATA GAMBLING HOUSE

THIS HOUSE IS ONE THAT SPECIALIZES IN CHO-HAN

AKAGI HAS BEEN GAMBLING HERE EVERY OTHER SATURDAY FOR THE PAST 3 MONTHS...

AND OVER THE SIX TIMES THAT HE HAS BEEN SEEN HERE...

HE HAS AMOUNTED A HUGE SUM OF CASH

HIS WINS ARE LARGE AND INCESSANT

ゴ!

ゴ..

ゴ!..

TO THIS POINT, THE AMOUNT OF MONEY HE HAS WON FROM THE KURATA GROUP AND THEIR CUSTOMERS AMOUNTS TO OVER 30 MILLION YEN.

IN MODERN TIMES, THIS SUM WOULD AMOUNT TO OVER 300 MILLION YEN...

IT IS TREMENDOUS!

A FAR CRY FROM A NORMAL AMOUNT TO GAIN THROUGH CHO-HAN

AND, BY ASSIMILATING THIS 30 MILLION YEN...

...HE HAS CAUSED THE KURATA GROUP TO LOSE OUT ON MONEY DUE TO HIS ONE-SIDED VICTORIES...

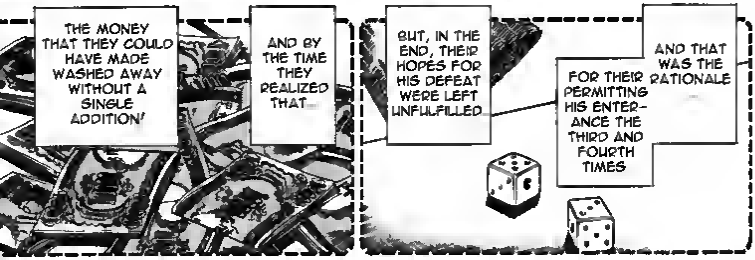
IF IT WERE NOT FOR HIM, THEY WOULD HAVE GAINED 6 MILLION YEN TO THIS POINT

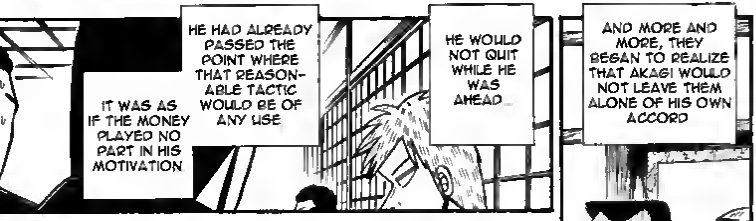
.....

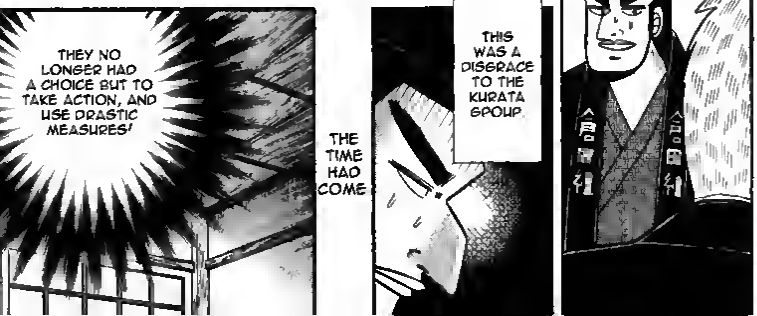
BUT THEY ARE LEFT WITH NO CHOICE BUT TO GIVE UP MORE AND MORE MONEY!
IT SEEMS TO THEM AS IF THEY ARE SIMPLY THROWING MONEY AWAY...
THE ORGANIZERS' EARNINGS, THEREFORE, HAVE ALSO BEEN GREATLY REDUCED
EVER SINCE AKAGI ARRIVED, THE GUESTS HAVE BECOME FEWER AND FEWER.

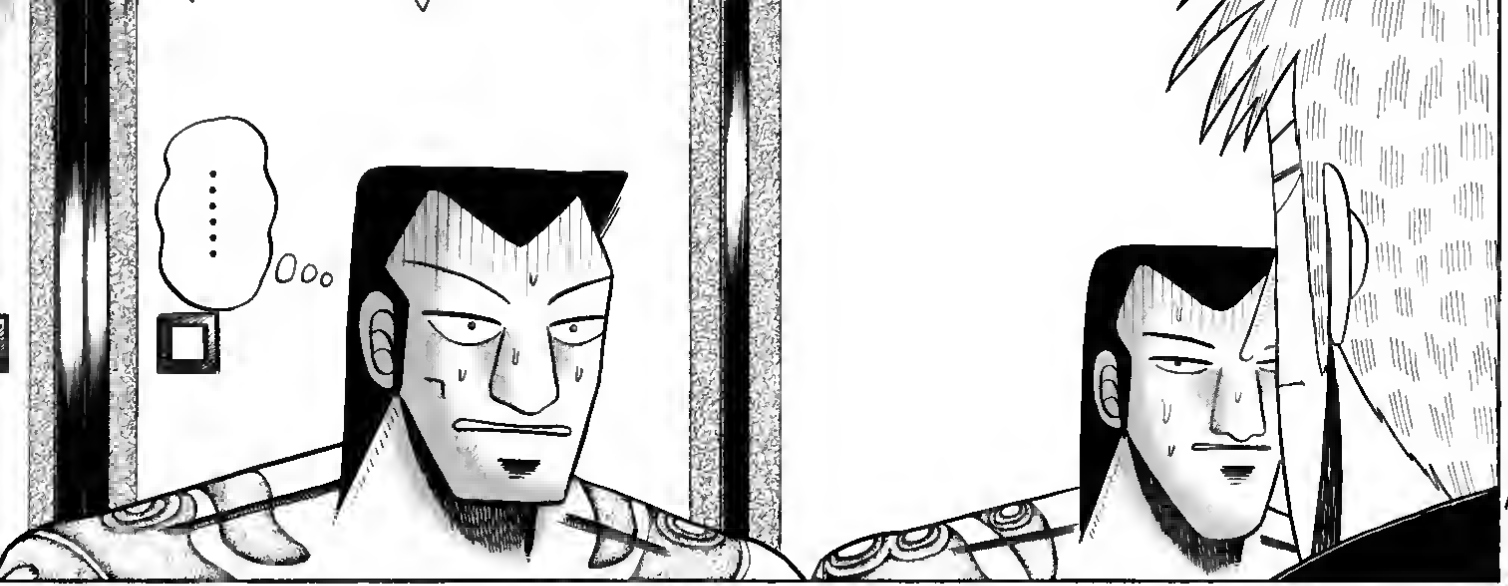
T/N: DAIGASHI: THE YAKUZA POSITION IN CHARGE OF A GAMBLING HOUSE, WORKING FOR THE BOSS DIRECTLY

THEY WOULD FOCUS ON CRUSHING HIM NEXT TIME HE MADE AN APPEARANCE
IT WAS JUDGED TO NOT BE ENOUGH TO FORCE HIM TO LEAVE AT THE TIME
IT HAD SEEMED AS THOUGH THERE WAS STILL A CHANCE FOR THE EARNINGS TO EVEN BACK OUT.
THOUGH IN HIS FIRST TWO APPEARANCES AKAGI HAD INDEED WON AT THE SAME RATE AS NOW...
THEY HANDLED IT IN THE SAME WAY THAT THEY WOULD FOR ANY EVENT RESULTING IN LOWER INCOME

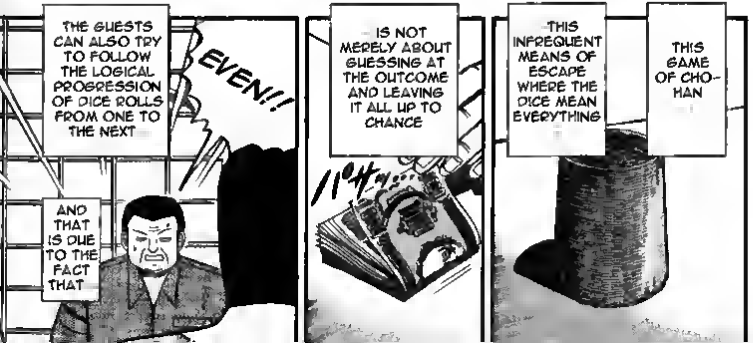

THE MONEY THAT THEY COULD HAVE MADE WASHED AWAY WITHOUT A SINGLE ADDITION!
AND BY THE TIME THEY REALIZED THAT...
BUT, IN THE END, THEIR HOPES FOR HIS DEFEAT WERE LEFT UNFULFILLED
AND THAT WAS THE RATIONALE FOR THEIR PERMITTING HIS ENTERANCE THE THIRD AND FOURTH TIMES

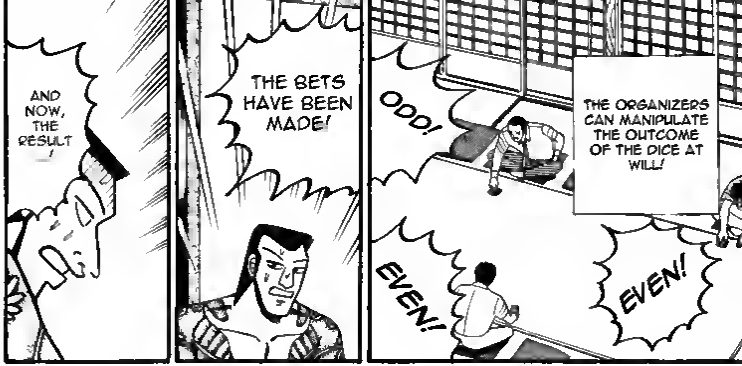

IT WAS AS IF THE MONEY PLAYED NO PART IN HIS MOTIVATION
HE HAD ALREADY PASSED THE POINT WHERE THAT REASONABLE TACTIC WOULD BE OF ANY USE
HE WOULD NOT QUIT WHILE HE WAS AHEAD...
AND MORE AND MORE, THEY BEGAN TO REALIZE THAT AKAGI WOULD NOT LEAVE THEM ALONE OF HIS OWN ACCORD

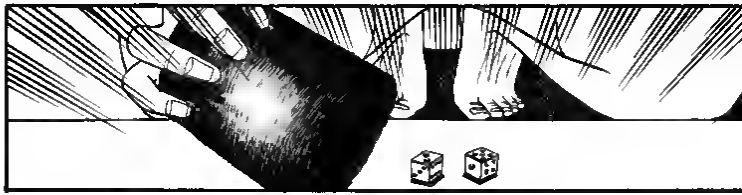

THEY NO LONGER HAD A CHOICE BUT TO TAKE ACTION, AND USE DRASTIC MEASURES!
THE TIME HAD COME
THIS WAS A DISGRACE TO THE KURATA GROUP.



NO MATTER WHAT, THEY HAD TO CRUSH HIM!

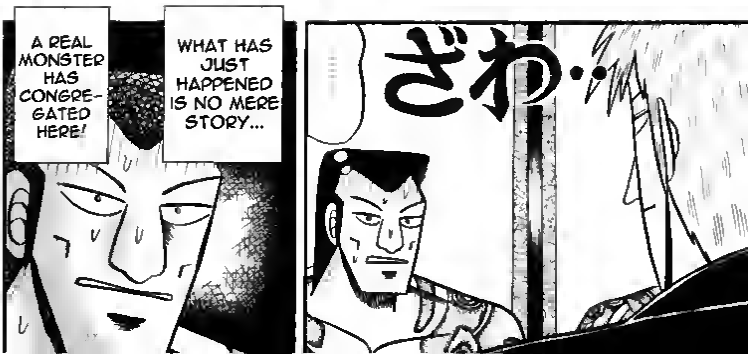

THE GUESTS CAN ALSO TRY TO FOLLOW THE LOGICAL PROGRESSION OF DICE ROLLS FROM ONE TO THE NEXT
EVEN!!
AND THAT IS DUE TO THE FACT THAT
IS NOT MERELY ABOUT GUESSING AT THE OUTCOME AND LEAVING IT ALL UP TO CHANCE
THIS INFREQUENT MEANS OF ESCAPE WHERE THE DICE MEAN EVERYTHING
THIS GAME OF CHO-HAN


AND NOW, THE RESULT!
THE BETS HAVE BEEN MADE!
ODD!
THE ORGANIZERS CAN MANIPULATE THE OUTCOME OF THE DICE AT WILL!
EVEN!
EVEN!



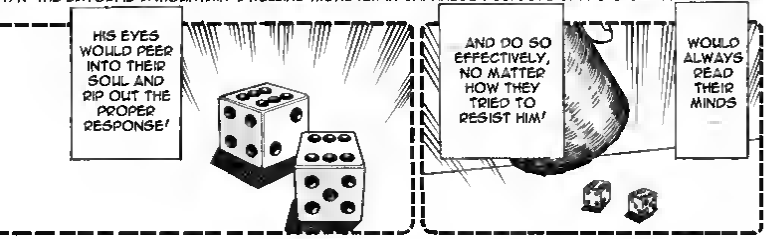
2-5...
ODD!
ざわ・・
ざわ
ざわ・・
THE GUESTS OF THE HOUSE ARE WELL AWARE OF THIS
OF COURSE
ガタッ・・
ガタッ・・

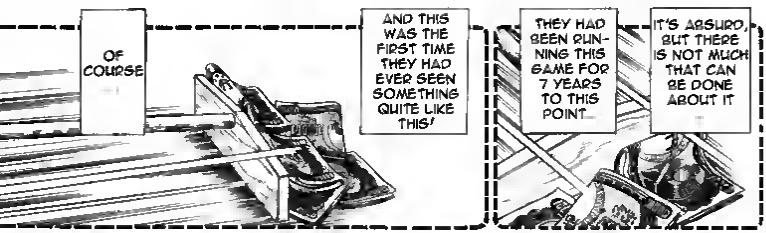
BUT, IN THE END, THAT IS SIMPLY THE SINGLE-MINDED THINKING OF NOVICES.
THE MONEY WILL BE SPREAD AROUND TO EVERYONE
BESIDES, WHETHER THEY END UP ON THE WINNING OR LOSING SIDE...
AS LONG AS THEY CAN'T CHANGE THE ROLL AFTER THE BETS, IT ALLOWS FOR AN ELEMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY TO IT
HOWEVER, MOST EVERYONE WHO VISITS IS FINE WITH THEM BEING ABLE TO MANIPULATE THE DICE.
...OR MORE APPROPRIATELY, WHETHER THEY LIVE OR DIE, IS DECIDED WITHIN A SMALL NUMBER OF ROLLS
IN THE END, WHETHER THEY WIN OR LOSE
. IT'S RARE FOR ANYONE TO WIN ANYTHING OF VALUE
IN THE END, THE DICE SIMPLY LEAD THE PATRONS AROUND BY THE NOSE...
ONLY THE WORST DRUNKARDS COULD BE EXPECTED TO ACTUALLY BELIEVE IT...
THIS CONCEPT IS ONE THAT IS CLEARLY A WORK OF FICTION...
AND YET
...THERE EXISTS A PARTICULAR SPIRIT... A DIETY THAT CAN CONTROL THE FATE OF THE DICE AND WHICH PATRONS ARE THE UNLUCKY ONES.
...THAT, DEEP IN THE MOUNTAINS
IT HAS BEEN SAID


A REAL MONSTER HAS CONGREGATED HERE!
WHAT HAS JUST HAPPENED IS NO MERE STORY...
ざわ・・・

THIS MAN, JUST LIKE THE SATORI OF LEGEND
TRULY, THIS IS AN HONEST-TO-GOODNESS MONSTER, AS IF LIFTED STRAIGHT OUT FROM A FAIRY TALE!

T/N: THE SATORI IS A MOUNTAIN-DWELLING MONSTER IN JAPANESE FOLKLORE CAPABLE OF READING MINDS

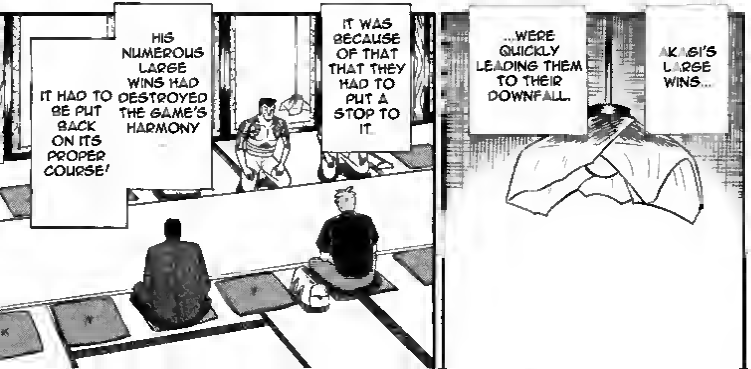

HIS EYES WOULD PEER INTO THEIR SOUL AND RIP OUT THE PROPER RESPONSE!
AND DO SO EFFECTIVELY, NO MATTER HOW THEY TRIED TO RESIST HIM!
WOULD ALWAYS READ THEIR MINDS

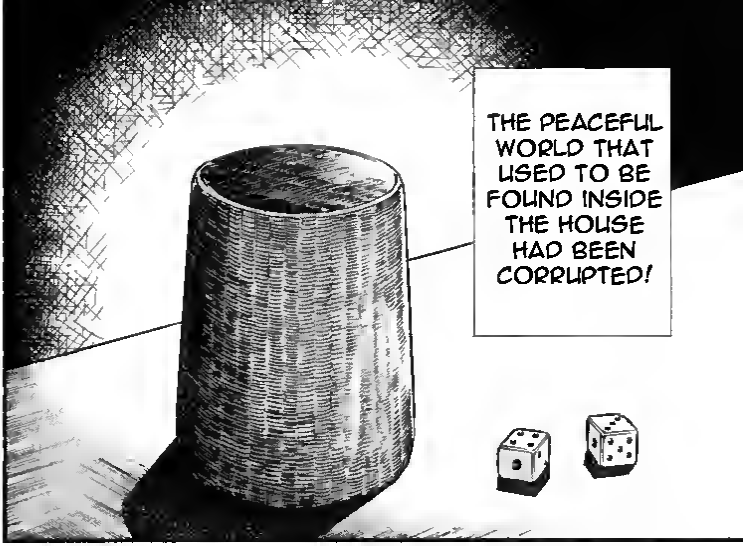

OF COURSE
AND THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME THEY HAD EVER SEEN SOMETHING QUITE LIKE THIS!
THEY HAD BEEN RUNNING THIS GAME FOR 7 YEARS TO THIS POINT...
IT'S ABSURD, BUT THERE IS NOT MUCH THAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT IT

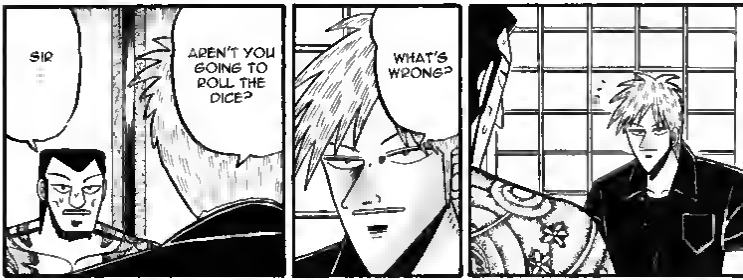
NO
RATHER
...THE EFFECT WAS THE SAME
HERE, IN SUCH A TENSE ATMOSPHERE AS THIS
AND TO FOLLOW
IT WAS AS IF HE HAD LOST THOSE SMALL SUMS ON PURPOSE!
NEEDLESS TO SAY, NOTHING COULD BE MORE IRRITATING TO THE ORGANIZERS.
LEADING THEM RIGHT TO WHAT HE CHOSE TO BET ON!
EVEN WITH THE OCCASIONAL MISS, HE WAS LEADING THEM ABOUT BY THE NOSE...
IT WAS AS IF THE ORGANIZERS' THOUGHTS WERE BEING MANIPULATED IN AND OF THEMSELVES!
THEY COULD DO NOTHING BUT GIVE HIM WHAT HE WANTED...
BUT THE ONLY ONE GETTING ANYTHING AT THE MOMENT WAS AKAGI HIMSELF!
BUT EVEN STILL, NOTHING COULD BE DONE ABOUT IT.
THEY FELT AS THOUGH THEY WERE BEING MOCKED

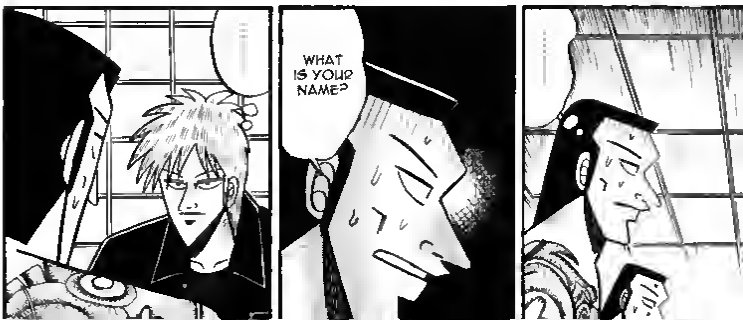
IT CONTINUED INFINITELY ...
THERE WAS NO END IN SIGHT ...
WITH NOTHING THEY COULD DO TO STOP IT!

IT WAS FOR THAT VERY REASON THAT THEY HAD TO DO SOMETHING
AND YET
IT WAS TRULY AN OVER-WHELMINGLY LOSING BATTLE

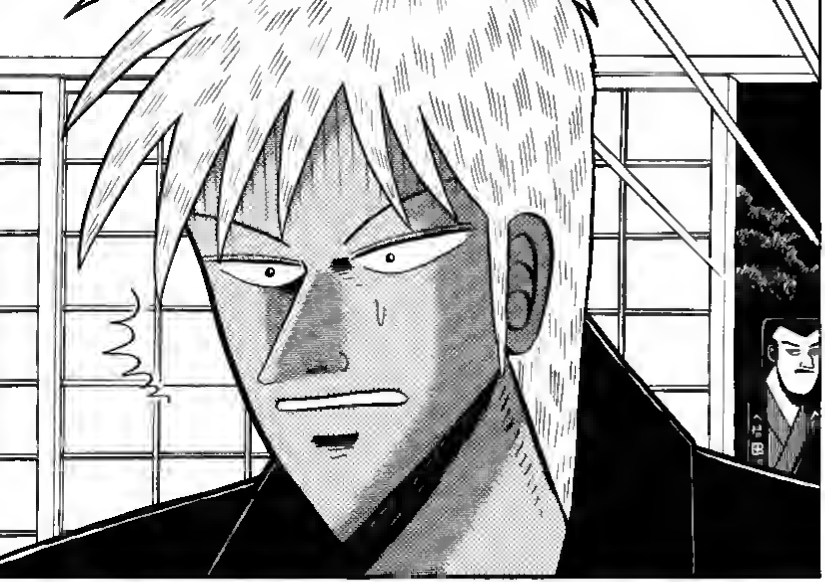

IT HAD TO BE PUT BACK ON ITS PROPER COURSE!
HIS NUMEROUS LARGE WINS HAD DESTROYED THE GAME'S HARMONY
IT WAS BECAUSE OF THAT THAT THEY HAD TO PUT A STOP TO IT
...WERE QUICKLY LEADING THEM TO THEIR DOWNFALL.
AKAGI'S LARGE WINS...


THE PEACEFUL WORLD THAT USED TO BE FOUND INSIDE THE HOUSE HAD BEEN CORRUPTED!


SIR
AREN'T YOU GOING TO ROLL THE DICE?
WHAT'S WRONG?


WHAT IS YOUR NAME?

AKAGI SHIGERU
AKAGI, HMM I WILL REMEMBER THAT NAME
IT'S REALLY TOO BAD FOR YOU
...BUT THIS IS THE END OF THE LINE
I'M AFRAID YOU'VE OVERSTAYED YOUR WELCOME!



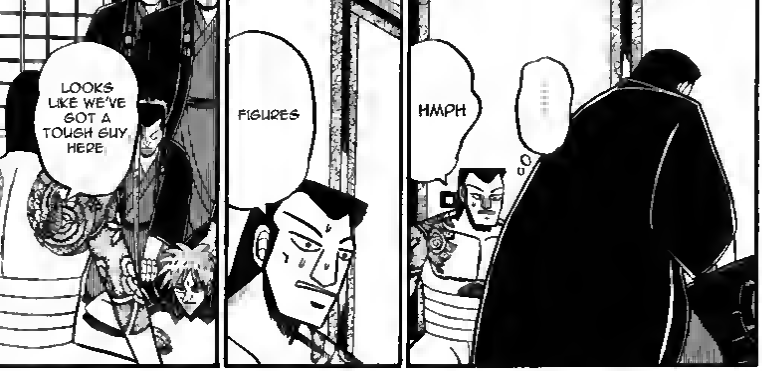
THE KURATA GROUP RESORTED TO VIOLENCE
TO BUT A FEW OF THE MORE ELDERLY PATRONS
ONCE THE GUESTS ALONGSIDE AKASI HAD DWINDLED DOWN

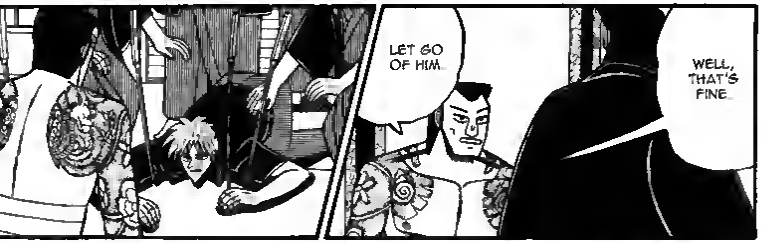
WAUGH!!?

THE KURATA GROUP REACHED THE END OF ITS ABILITY TO REMAIN PASSIVE
AT THE SAME TIME THE CLOCK STRUCK 11

ONLY IF YOU DO THAT WILL WE PERMIT YOU TO LEAVE HERE WITH YOUR HEAD!
BEG FOR YOUR LIFE, YOU LOWLY WORM!
KYAAAAAAAHHHHH!!!
HAHH
AUUUUGGGHHH....!!!
AT THAT TIME, THEY MADE THEIR MOVE!

……


LOOKS LIKE WE'VE GOT A TOUGH GUY HERE.
FIGURES
HMPH


LET GO OF HIM.
WELL, THAT'S FINE.

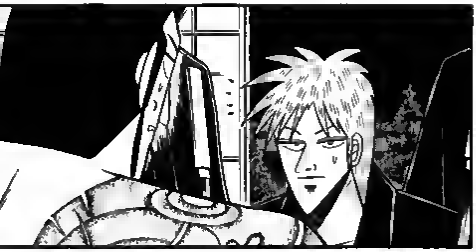
ざわ…
ざわ…
ざわ…
HRMPH
……

IF SOMEONE GIVES US REASON TO, WE'LL USE THOSE SWORDS STAB THEM RIGHT THROUGH
WE DON'T LIKE TO DO THIS, BUT
YOU ARE NO EXCEP-TION.
AKAGI, WAS IT?
NOW, THEN...

HOW-EVER...
WE DO NOT TAKE KINDLY TO THAT SORT OF MIS-CONDUCT
THAT SAID, WHAT YOU'VE DONE IS VIOLATE THE TRUST WE HAVE BETWEEN OURSELVES AND OUR CUSTOMERS

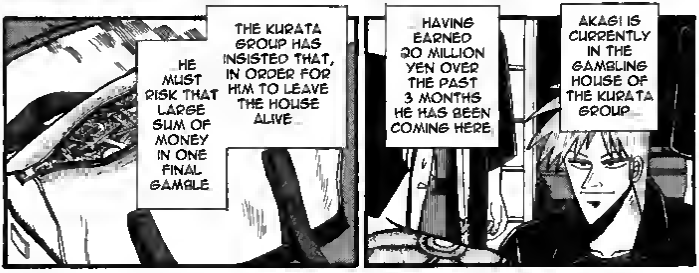
THIS CAN END SIMPLY WITH YOUR BANISH-MENT FROM EVER RETURNING TO THIS PLACE
WE DON'T PARTICULARLY CARE TO HAVE TO CLEAN UP THE BLOOD-STAINS FROM THIS ROOM.
ALL THOSE WHO DECIDE TO ENTER THIS HOUSE OF OURS ARE VERY VALUABLE TO US.
THOSE WHO CHOOSE TO GAM-BLE...
HOW-EVER...
WE ALSO WON'T REQUIRE THAT YOU GIVE US BACK ANY MONEY THAT YOU HAVE IN YOUR BAG
AND SO, WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE YOU LIVE.

WE WILL REQUIRE THAT YOU HAVE ONE FINAL BET!

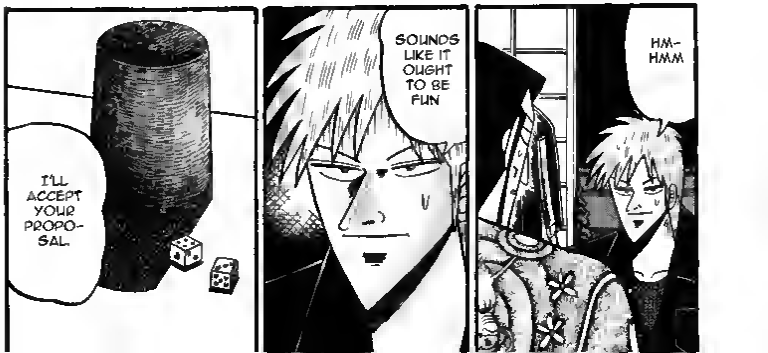


AND IN THIS FINAL ROUND, YOU WILL BET EVERYTHING...
YOU WILL RETURN ALL OF THE MONEY IN THAT BAG SHOULD YOU LOSE!

ざわ…ざわ…


AKAGI IS CURRENTLY IN THE GAMBLING HOUSE OF THE KURATA GROUP
HAVING EARNED 20 MILLION YEN OVER THE PAST 3 MONTHS HE HAS BEEN COMING HERE
THE KURATA GROUP HAS INSISTED THAT, IN ORDER FOR HIM TO LEAVE THE HOUSE ALIVE
HE MUST RISK THAT LARGE SUM OF MONEY IN ONE FINAL GAMBLE

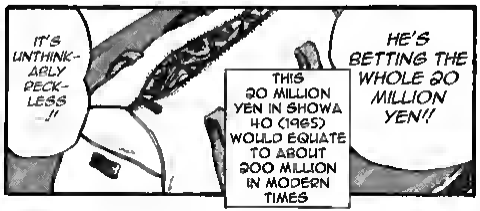
THIS IS MEANT TO INTI-MIDATE HIM, BUT
HMM-HM-HM

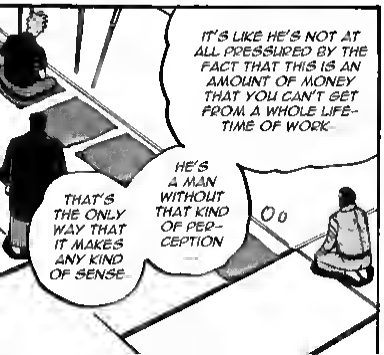

HM-HMM
SOUNDS LIKE IT OUGHT TO BE FUN
I'LL ACCEPT YOUR PROPO-SAL

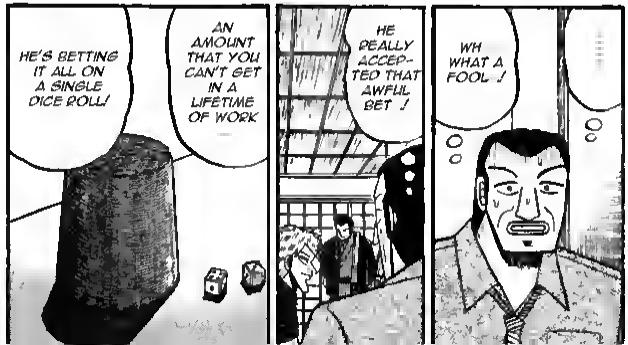
CHAPTER 60 - DEVIATION

第60話 逸脱

AKAGI READILY ACCEPTS IT...!


IT'S UNTHINK-ABLY RECK-LESS !!
THIS 20 MILLION YEN IN SHOWA 40 (1965) WOULD EQUATE TO ABOUT 200 MILLION IN MODERN TIMES
HE'S BETTING THE WHOLE 20 MILLION YEN!!

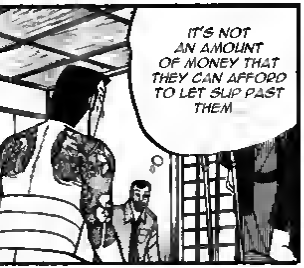

IT'S LIKE HE'S NOT AT ALL PRESSURED BY THE FACT THAT THIS IS AN AMOUNT OF MONEY THAT YOU CAN'T GET FROM A WHOLE LIFE-TIME OF WORK
HE'S A MAN WITHOUT THAT KIND OF PER-CEPTION
THAT'S THE ONLY WAY THAT IT MAKES ANY KIND OF SENSE

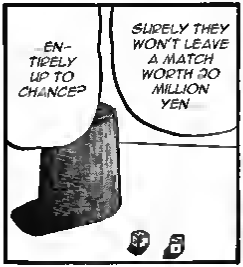

HE'S BETTING IT ALL ON A SINGLE DICE ROLL!
AN AMOUNT THAT YOU CAN'T GET IN A LIFETIME OF WORK
HE REALLY ACCEP-TED THAT AWFUL BET !
WH WHAT A FOOL !

HIS EXPRESSION HASN'T EVEN CHANGED
IF IT WERE ME, I WOULD BE TREMBLING AT THE VERY THOUGHT
HIM HAVING THIS KIND OF REACTION TO SUCH A GIGANTIC GAMBLE
...I CAN'T EVEN BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND IT

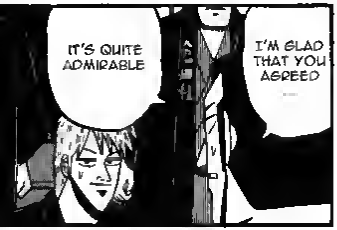
PERHAPS
THIS MAN SEES HIMSELF AS TOO GOOD FOR MONEY
HE'S SOMEHOW GOTTEN IT INTO HIS HEAD THAT HE DOESN'T NEED IT ?
IN THAT CASE
...THE KUDATA GROUP IS THE EXACT OPPOSITE

NATURALLY, THEY'RE VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THE MONEY THAT THEY HAVE TO GAIN, HERE
AND SINCE THEY HAVE THAT STANCE
BEFORE THEY WILL CONSIDER LETTING THIS AKAGI GUY LEAVE
...THEY NEED TO GET THEIR MONEY BACK FROM HIM!
THAT IS TO SAY, THIS SINGLE CHO-HAN MATCH WORTH 30 MILLION YEN
...IS ABOUT GETTING THEMSELVES BACK ON TRACK!


IT'S NOT AN AMOUNT OF MONEY THAT THEY CAN AFFORD TO LET SLIP PAST THEM


SURELY THEY WON'T LEAVE A MATCH WORTH 30 MILLION YEN
-EN-TIRELY UP TO CHANCE?

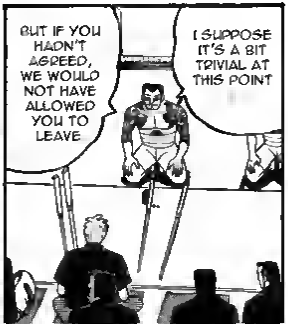
SO, WHAT KIND OF POLICIES WILL THEY ADD ..?


IT'S QUITE ADMIRABLE
I'M GLAD THAT YOU AGREED

VERY WELL AKAGI, RIGHT?
THEY MUST THINK THEY HAVE A GOOD CHANCE OF WINNING DO THEY HAVE SOMETHING UP THEIR SLEEVES TO GIVE THEM THE EDGE?

WAS OUR TOP PRIORITY WITH THAT PROPOSAL.
SIMPLY GETTING YOU TO TAKE THE GAMBLE

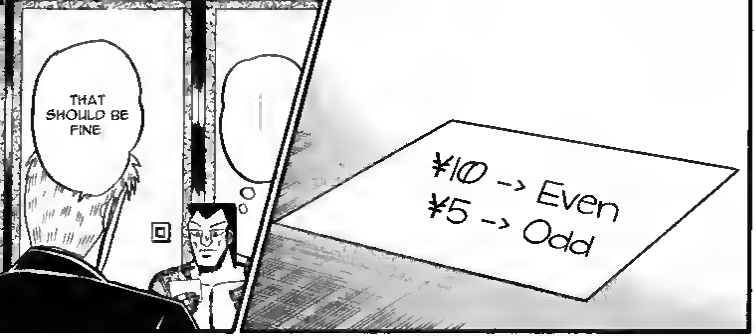
I SUPPOSE WE COULD HAVE SETTLED FOR IT IF YOU'D DEMANDED TO RISK LESS THAN ALL OF YOUR MONEY
HAH-HAH NEVER-THELESS

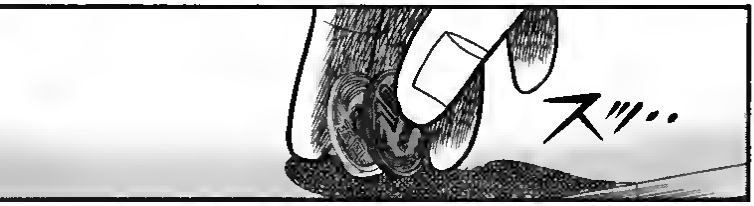

BUT IF YOU HADN'T AGREED, WE WOULD NOT HAVE ALLOWED YOU TO LEAVE
I SUPPOSE IT'S A BIT TRIVIAL AT THIS POINT

HAH-HAH...
A PRO-POSAL...?
BEFORE WE BEGIN, I HAVE A SINGLE PROPOSAL TO MAKE
NOW, THEN
.....
IT'S A SIMPLE MATTER
WHAT'S THAT LOOK FOR?
WE DON'T WANT TO HAVE ANY KIND OF UNCERTAINTY AS TO WHAT THE RESULTS ARE
CONSIDERING HOW THIS IS A SINGLE DICE ROLL WORTH SUCH A LARGE AMOUNT OF MONEY...
IT IS THIS THAT WE WOULD LIKE TO RE-VERSE
AND AFTER THAT, THE DICE ARE REVEALED AND THE MONEY IS DISTRIBUTED ACCORDINGLY.
YOU ARE AL-LOWED TO BET FREELY ON EVEN OR ODD.
ONCE THE DICE ARE ROLLED
NOR-MALLY IN THIS GAME OF CHO-HAN...
CONSIDERING HOW MUCH YOU'VE BEEN WIN-NING...
IT'S NOT REALLY ALL THAT LOGICAL, BUT...
...AND THEN I WILL ROLL THE DICE.
IN OTHER WORDS, YOU WILL MAKE YOUR BET FIRST

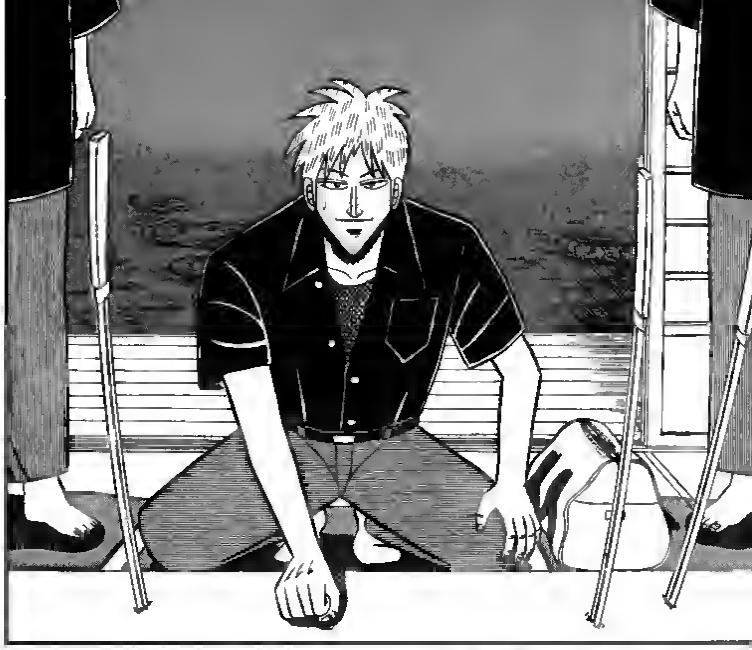
IT JUST FEELS LIKE YOU HAVE SOME KIND OF TRICK
SOME WAY OF TRACKING HOW THE DICE MOVE
THAT IS TO SAY
...WE THINK YOU MIGHT BE SOMEHOW TRACKING WHICH SIDE OF THE DICE WILL LAND UP, THOUGH WE DON'T KNOW HOW
WE DON'T HONESTLY BELIEVE THAT'S WHAT'S HAPPENING
BUT IT'S BETTER TO BE SAFE THAN SORRY.
HMM-HM
I SEE.
YOUR SUSPICION IS A BIT OFF THE MARK, BUT
TO PUT YOUR MIND AT EASE, I SUPPOSE I CAN ALLOW THAT
.....
SO, THEN, LET'S TRY THIS
I'VE GOT A BIT OF POCKET CHANGE, HERE...
I'LL USE THESE 10-YEN AND 5-YEN COINS TO PICK BETWEEN EVEN AND ODD BEFORE YOU ROLL.
?

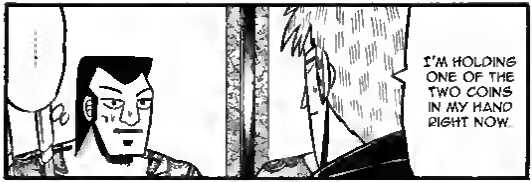
CAN I GET A PENCIL AND SOME PAPER?
THAT'S RIGHT
10-YEN AND 5-YEN ?
IN SHORT, I'LL SLIP MY HAND INTO MY POCKET
CHOOSE ONE OF THE COINS TO HOLD ON TO
AND THEN, HOLD IT OUT LIKE SO
IF I HAVE THE 10-YEN COIN IN MY HAND AFTER THE DICE ARE ROLLED,
THAT WILL MEAN EVEN
AND IF IT'S THE 5-YEN COIN, IT WILL BE ODD
HMM HMM..
¥10 -> Even
¥5 -> Odd
SO, THEN, SINCE WE HAVE THIS,
THERE WILL BE NO QUESTION AS TO THE OUTCOME
HM-HMM
THIS IS JUST TO MAKE SURE WE DON'T FORGET WHICH IS WHICH
SORRY YOU DON'T GET TO TALK YOUR WAY OUT OF A LOSS


THAT SHOULD BE FINE
¥10 -> Even
¥5 -> Odd

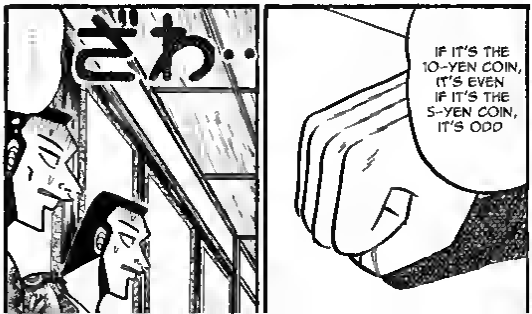

スッ‥

ゴゴゴ!!
スッ



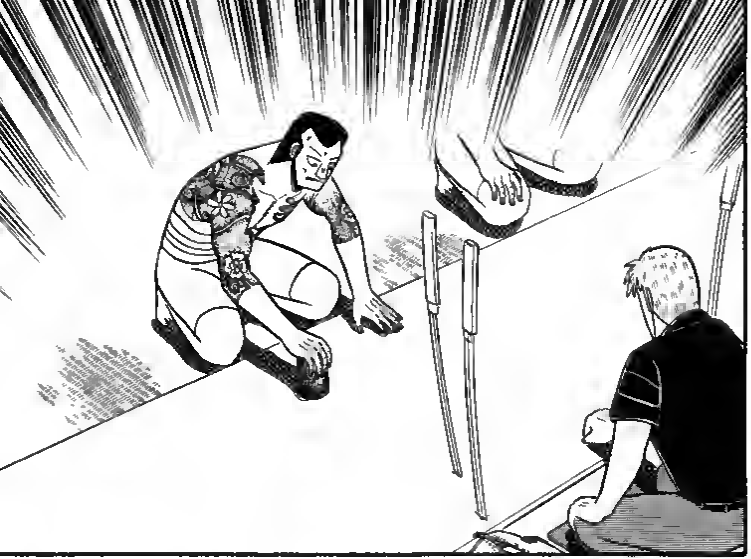

I'M HOLDING ONE OF THE TWO COINS IN MY HAND RIGHT NOW.

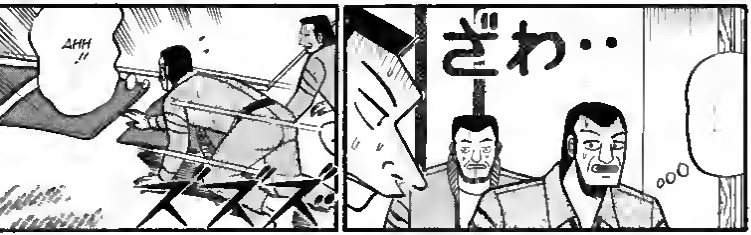
I'VE DECIDED!


IF IT'S THE 10-YEN COIN, IT'S EVEN IF IT'S THE 5-YEN COIN, IT'S ODD
ざわ…

NO PROB-LEM
ざわ‥ざわ‥
DAIGASHI
KURAISHI
DO IT!
……
YES, SIR!
……
AND NOW FOR THE ROLL!

URGH
!!



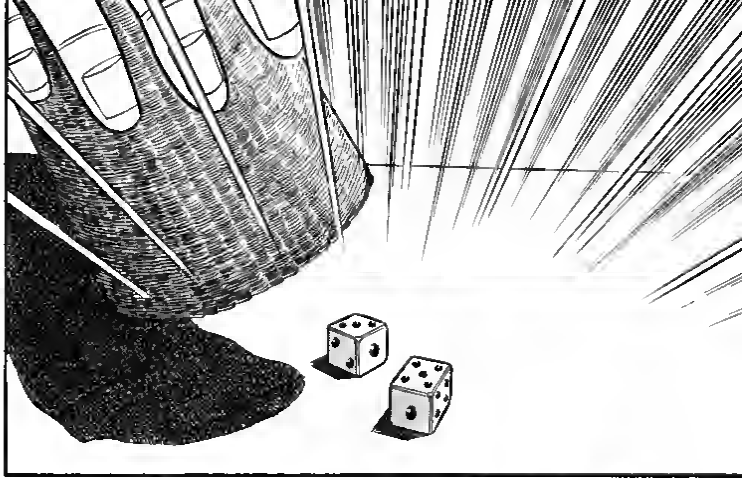

AHH !!
ズズズ
ざわ‥
ooo

IT'S BECOME SHEER PSYCHO-LOGICAL WARFARE!
EVEN IF HE WAS SOMEHOW TRACKING THE MOTION OF THE DICE, THAT'S RIGHT OUT THE WINDOW, NOW
SO IT'S FOR SURE
THIS GUY MADE HIS DECISION BETWEEN EVEN AND ODD BEFORE THE ROLL TOOK PLACE
WHICH CHOICE WAS THE WINNER ?
ooo

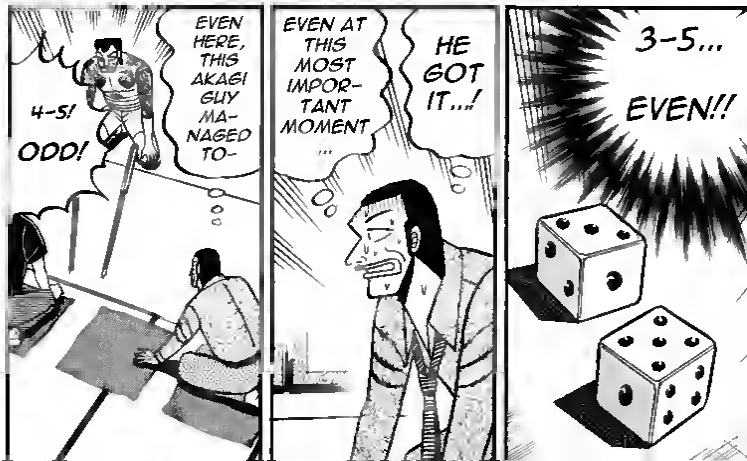
OR WASN'T HE...?
WAS HE ABLE TO READ HIM...?
WAS HE ABLE TO SEE THROUGH THE KUBATA GROUP'S DEALER FOR THIS GAME...?
WHAT DID HE CHOOSE...?
HE MADE HIS BET BEFORE THE DICE WERE ROLLED
WAS HIS BET ON EVEN OR ODD...?

HM-HMM
AH!!

ざわ…
10 YEN MEANS EVEN!
SO WHAT WAS THE ROLL…?!
IT'S THE 10-YEN COIN…!
HEH-HEH…
……
……

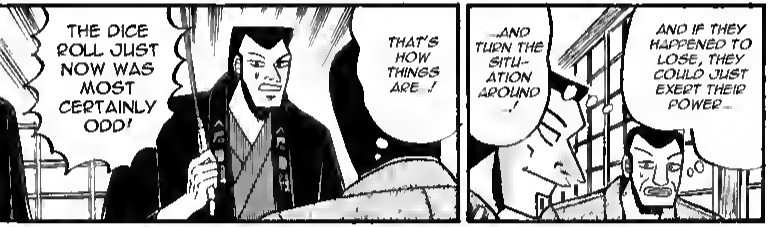


URGH...!!

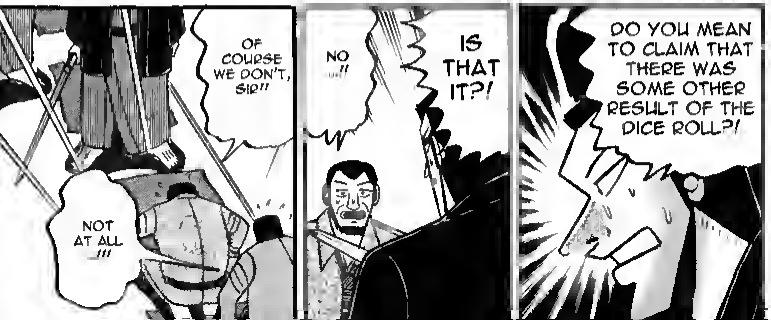

4-5!
ODD!
EVEN HERE, THIS AKAGI GUY MA-NAGED TO-
EVEN AT THIS MOST IMPOR-TANT MOMENT ...
HE GOT IT...!
3-5...
EVEN!!

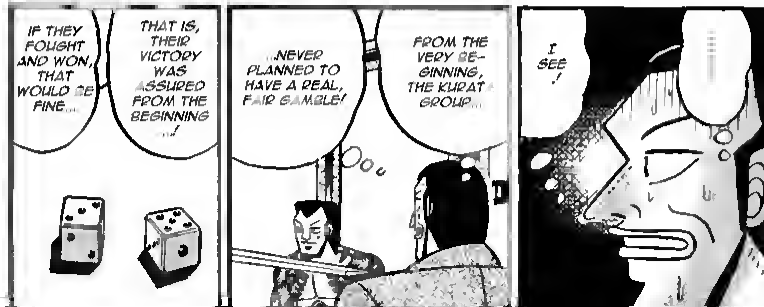
WHA ...?!
VALUED PATRONS!
B-BUT...!
Y YOU'RE KIDDING ...!!
WHAA ...!!
WHAT IS ALL THIS COMMOTION ABOUT?
WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE PROBLEM?

DO YOU SEE ANYTHING WRONG, HERE?
AHH ...!!
URGH ...!!


THE DICE ROLL JUST NOW WAS MOST CERTAINLY ODD!
THAT'S HOW THINGS ARE...!
...AND TURN THE SITU-ATION AROUND...!
AND IF THEY HAPPENED TO LOSE, THEY COULD JUST EXERT THEIR POWER...

ざわ..ざわ..
ざわ...

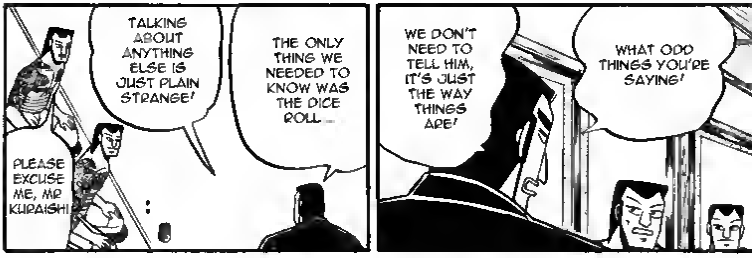

OF COURSE WE DON'T, SIR!!
NOT AT ALL...!!!
NO...!!
IS THAT IT?!
DO YOU MEAN TO CLAIM THAT THERE WAS SOME OTHER RESULT OF THE DICE ROLL?!

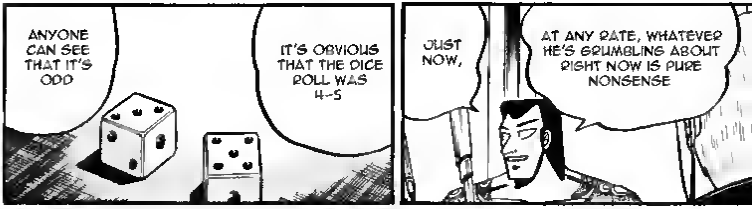

IF THEY FOUGHT AND WON, THAT WOULD BE FINE...
THAT IS, THEIR VICTORY WAS ASSURED FROM THE BEGINNING...!
...NEVER PLANNED TO HAVE A REAL, FAIR GAMBLE!
FROM THE VERY BE-GINNING, THE KURAT GROUP...
I SEE...!

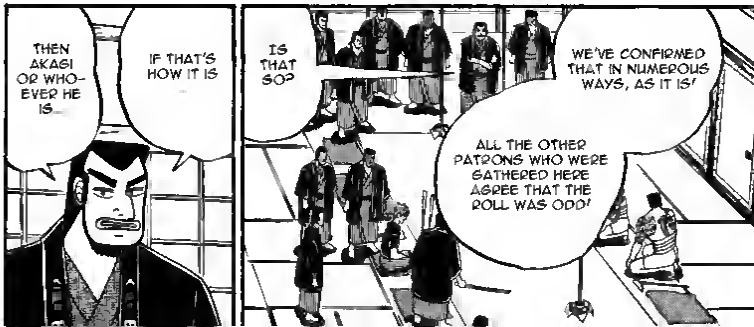
HEH-HEH
ODD...!!!
IT'S DEFINITELY ODD, SIR!
AKAGI, OR WHATEVER YOUR NAME WAS.
SO, THERE YOU HAVE IT!
HEY, YOU!
YOU HAVE MY SINCEREST CONDOLENCES, BUT THAT MONEY IS OURS, NOW.
HUH...?
SIR!

CUT THE BULL CRAP!
IT'S EVEN!
HAH-HAH-HAH!
HUH?!
WHA-?
YOU'RE ACTING SO VERY STRANGE!
AGAIN WITH THAT?
IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT YOU CHOOSE TO BLURT OUT...
ABOUT IT BEING EVEN OR ANYTHING ELSE
NO... MORE THAN THAT!

HEY, HEY!
IF NOT, HE WOULDN'T HAVE SAID SUCH NONSENSE LIKE THE ROLL BEING EVEN!
HE MUST HAVE HEARD US WRONG!


PLEASE EXCUSE ME, MR KURAISHI
TALKING ABOUT ANYTHING ELSE IS JUST PLAIN STRANGE!
THE ONLY THING WE NEEDED TO KNOW WAS THE DICE ROLL...
WE DON'T NEED TO TELL HIM, IT'S JUST THE WAY THINGS ARE!
WHAT ODD THINGS YOU'RE SAYING!


ANYONE CAN SEE THAT IT'S ODD
IT'S OBVIOUS THAT THE DICE ROLL WAS 4-5
JUST NOW,
AT ANY RATE, WHATEVER HE'S GRUMBLING ABOUT RIGHT NOW IS PURE NONSENSE

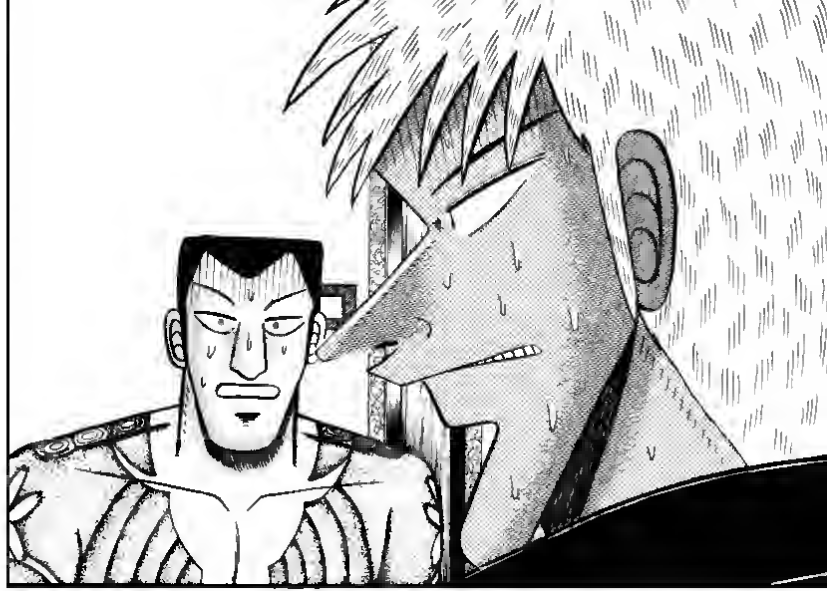

THEN AKAGI OR WHO-EVER HE IS...
IF THAT'S HOW IT IS...
IS THAT SO?
WE'VE CONFIRMED THAT IN NUMEROUS WAYS, AS IT IS!
ALL THE OTHER PATRONS WHO WERE GATHERED HERE AGREE THAT THE ROLL WAS ODD!

HEH-HEH-HEH!
...IS SIMPLY IGNORING A GIVEN FACT!
IT'S ONLY NATURAL FOR PEOPLE TO TRY TO HOPELESSLY DEFEND THINGS THAT THEY'VE ALREADY LOST, AFTER ALL!
THAT'S RIGHT!
BUT YOU SIMPLY MUST COME TO TERMS WITH IT!
I COMPLETELY UNDERSTAND THAT YOU'RE UPSET AT HAVING LOST SO MUCH SO QUICKLY
クス‥
クス‥
HEH-HEH
EVEN IF SO MANY PEOPLE AGREE THAT THE ROLL IS ODD!
どっ

EVERY SINGLE ONE...
OF YOU DESPICABLE FUCKS...
...
...YOU'RE ALL GOING STRAIGHT TO HELL!

第61話 心中
CHAPTER 61 - HEART

ざわ・・・



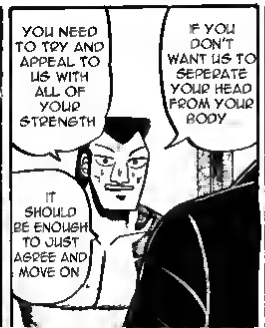
...YOU'RE A CHICKEN, AND WE'VE GOT YOUR TINY NECK FIRMLY PRESSED BETWEEN OUR FINGERS...

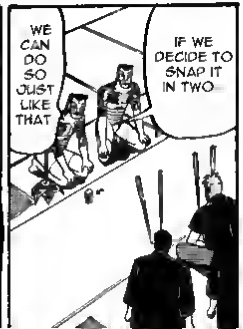
THAT IS TO SAY, IT'S AS IF
RIGHT NOW, YOU ARE IN NO POSITION TO SPEAK BACK TO US IN SUCH A MANNER

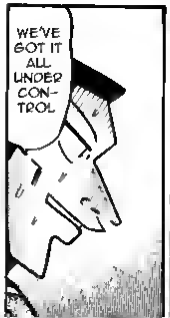
HEH-HEH

ざわ・・・ざわ

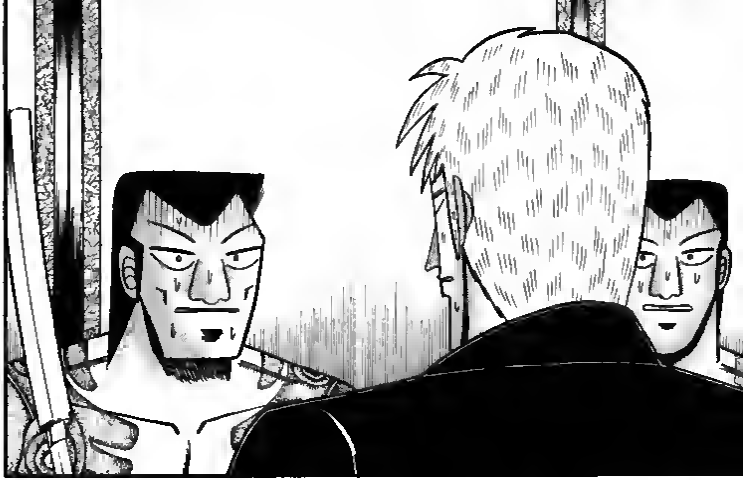
I WILL ASK YOU ONCE MORE

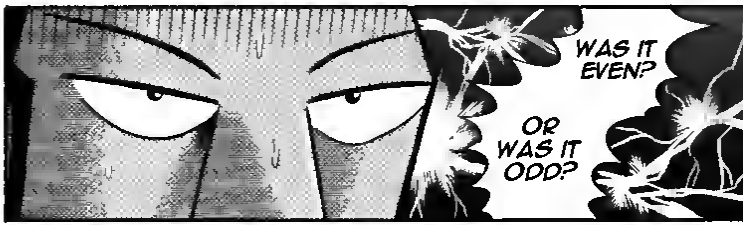

YOU NEED TO TRY AND APPEAL TO US WITH ALL OF YOUR STRENGTH
IT SHOULD BE ENOUGH TO JUST AGREE AND MOVE ON
IF YOU DON'T WANT US TO SEPERATE YOUR HEAD FROM YOUR BODY

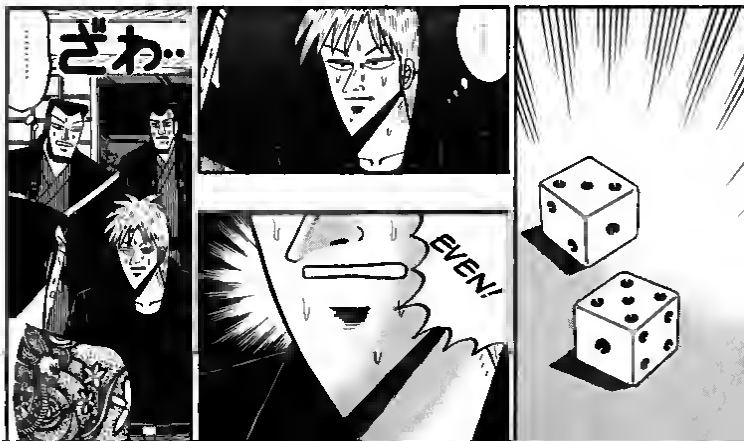

WE CAN DO SO JUST LIKE THAT
IF WE DECIDE TO SNAP IT IN TWO


WE'VE GOT IT ALL UNDER CON-TROL

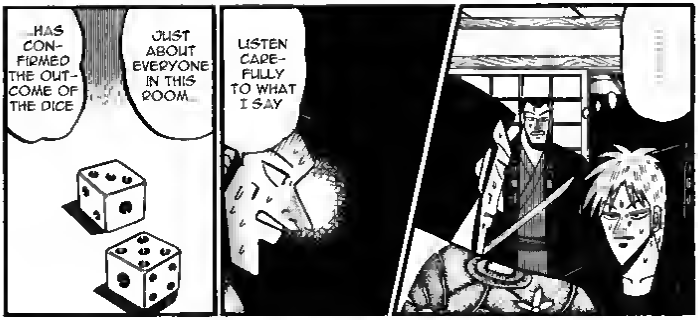
YOU REALLY DON'T GET IT, DO YOU?

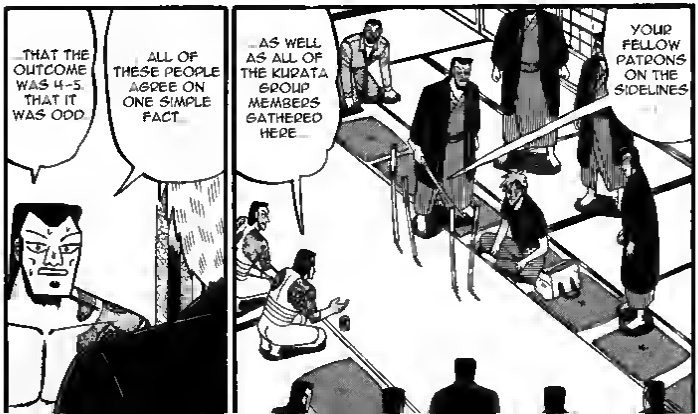



WAS IT EVEN?
OR WAS IT ODD?

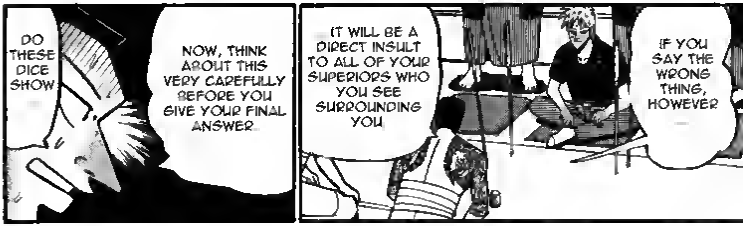

ざわ…
EVEN!

.....
HOLD ON!
TH THIS GUY ...!!

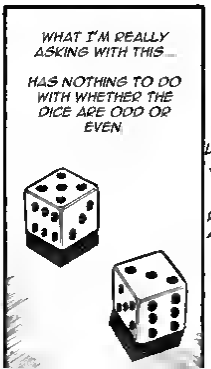

...HAS CONFIRMED THE OUTCOME OF THE DICE
JUST ABOUT EVERYONE IN THIS ROOM...
LISTEN CAREFULLY TO WHAT I SAY

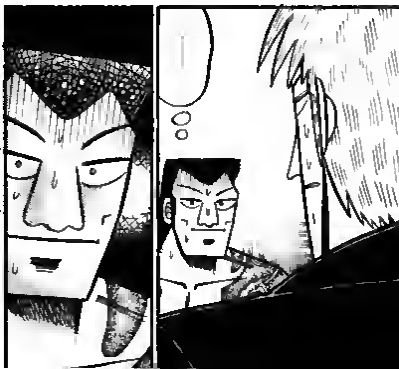

...THAT THE OUTCOME WAS 4-5 THAT IT WAS ODD
...ALL OF THESE PEOPLE AGREE ON ONE SIMPLE FACT...
...AS WELL AS ALL OF THE KURATA GROUP MEMBERS GATHERED HERE...
YOUR FELLOW PATRONS ON THE SIDELINES

ALL OF THIS CAN END, NICE AND QUIETLY
IF YOU CAN SIMPLY AGREE WITHOUT RAISING A FUSS ABOUT IT...
THE ONLY ONE WHO HAS YET TO CONFIRM THIS FACT IS YOU


DO THESE DICE SHOW
NOW, THINK ABOUT THIS VERY CAREFULLY BEFORE YOU GIVE YOUR FINAL ANSWER.
IT WILL BE A DIRECT INSULT TO ALL OF YOUR SUPERIORS WHO YOU SEE SURROUNDING YOU
IF YOU SAY THE WRONG THING, HOWEVER

WHAT I'M REALLY ASKING YOU ABOUT ...



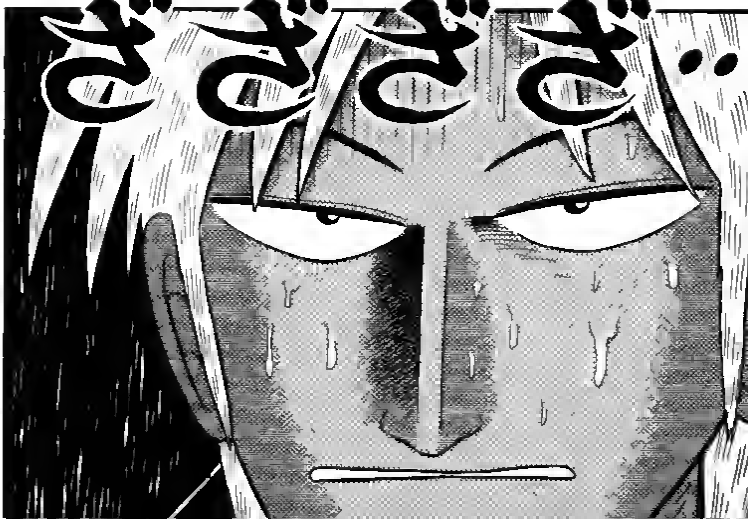


...IS YOUR LIFE!

DO YOU WISH TO DIE? IT'S A SIMPLE QUESTION.
OR ON THE CONTRARY

DO YOU HAVE THE DESIRE TO CONTINUE LIVING?

ぐぐ……

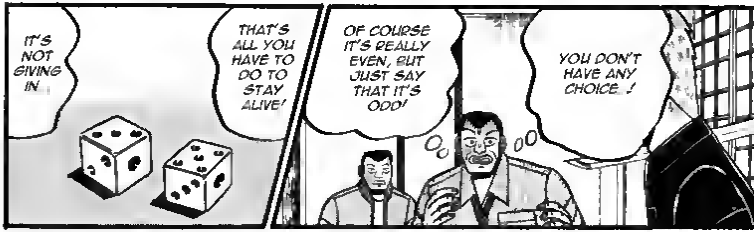

ぐぐぐぐ……

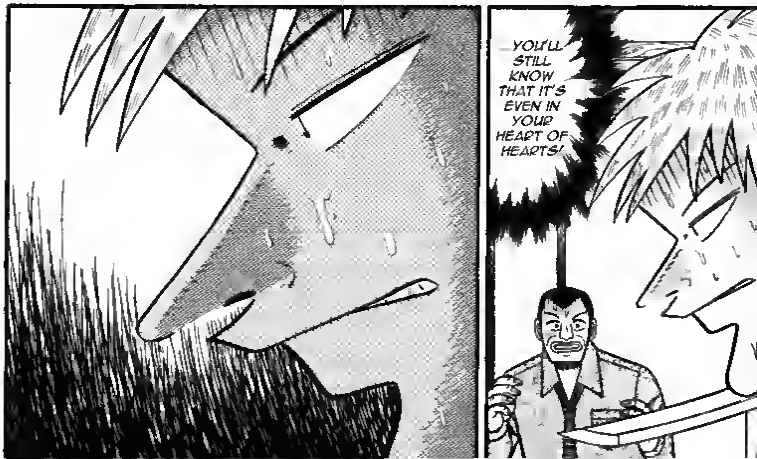
IF THERE WERE A MAN
.....
WHO RULED OVER THIS ENTIRE COUNTRY...
NO... EVEN THAT IS TOO SMALL OF A SCALE
IF ALL OF THIS WORLD'S COUNTRIES AND LAND MASSES WERE DICTATED BY ONE RULER
FROM EUROPE TO EURASIA, NORTH TO SOUTH
NOT EVEN IF THIS RULER WERE SOME KIND OF OTHERWOPLDLY MONSTER...
...COULD HE MANAGE TO DISTORT THE TRUTH!
HE COULD NOT CHANGE EVENTS AROUND, HE COULD NOT ALTER MY UNTIMELY DEATH
...AND HE CERTAINLY COULD NOT CHANGE THE OUTCOME OF A GAMBLE!

IT'S EVEN!

HOW FAR DO YOU THINK YOU CAN PRESS YOUR LUCK?!
YOU LITTLE SHIT!!!
WAUGH!!

IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW MUCH MONEY IS ON THE LINE, HERE
WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS ...?!
WH
I CAN KILL YOU YOU KNOW!
DON'T FUCK AROUND WITH US!!!
KYAAAAAUGH!!
IF THESE YAKUZA DON'T SEE YOUR FUGHT, IT'S ALL OVER!!
YOU SHOULD JUST GO ALONG WITH THEM!

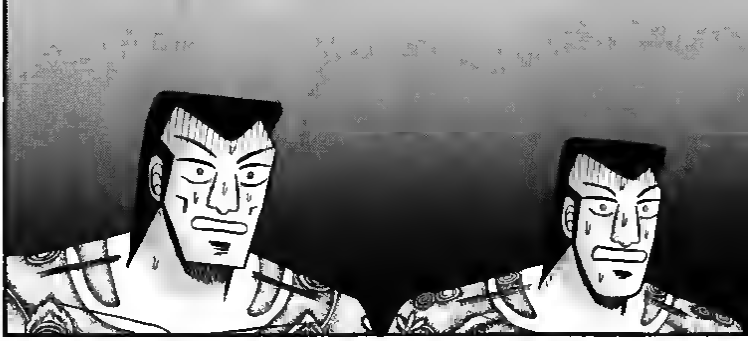

IT'S NOT GIVING IN
THAT'S ALL YOU HAVE TO DO TO STAY ALIVE!
OF COURSE IT'S REALLY EVEN, BUT JUST SAY THAT IT'S ODD!
YOU DON'T HAVE ANY CHOICE...!

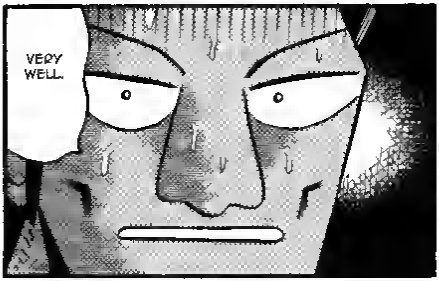

...YOU'LL STILL KNOW THAT IT'S EVEN IN YOUR HEART OF HEARTS!

ボヨ…
ボヨ…
DO YOU REALLY WANT TO DIE NOW, KID?
…THAT YOU'RE TAKING A CHANCE, AND THINKING THAT IF IT COMES RIGHT DOWN TO IT, WE WON'T ACTUALLY BE ABLE TO KILL YOU.
I'D WAGER A GUESS
I DOUBT YOU'RE REALLY THINKING RATIONALLY RIGHT NOW
WELL, YOU'RE STILL YOUNG AND FULL OF STUPID IDEAS
WE WILL NEVER STOP HALFWAY THROUGH A JOB
THIS IS JUST BUSINESS AS USUAL FOR US
EVEN IF…
FOR SOMETHING LIKE THIS, WE WON'T EVEN BAT AN EYE AT HAVING TO KILL SOMEONE IF THEY DON'T CONFORM TO OUR DEMANDS
WE'LL REALLY DO IT
BUT YOU'RE WRONG

...EVEN IF WE HAVE TO KILL SOMEONE!
I WILL ASK YOU ONE MORE TIME!
THIS IS ABSOLUTELY YOUR LAST CHANCE...
IF YOU ANSWER THIS QUESTION INCORRECTLY JUST ONE MORE TIME...
...WE WILL SWEEP YOUR HEAD CLEAN OFF YOUR SHOULDERS!
ANSWER ME THIS, AKAGI!
eek..!!
TAKE A LOOK AT THESE DICE!
ARE THEY EVEN...
OR ODD?!

EVEN!!

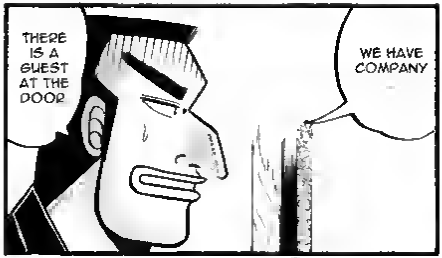



VERY WELL.

KH...!!

THEN
DIE!!

HAAAA AAAAAA AAAAH HHH!!!
AAAUU UGH..!!
WAIT!


THERE IS A GUEST AT THE DOOR
WE HAVE COMPANY

CAN'T YOU HEAR?
?

YEAH
.....
GO TO THEM

KH
Can anybody hear me? *knock* Hello?

knock
knock
Is anybody there..?

……
ドカ…
ドカ…
ドン!!

MAY I HELP YOU?

WE'RE LOOKING TO GAMBLE, TONIGHT
THE HOUSE IS STILL OPEN, RIGHT?
I'M SORRY TO SAY THIS, BUT...
WE'VE CLOSED FOR THE NIGHT
IT'S A BIT EARLY, BUT IT CAN'T BE HELPED.
HMM?
CLOSED, YOU SAY...?
YES.
I'M TERRIBLY SORRY FOR THE INCONVENIENCE, BUT...
IN LIGHT OF THAT...
...I MUST RESPECTFULLY ASK YOU TO TAKE YOUR LEAVE.
ペコ...
WH...?
HEY ...!!
ス
WHAT'S UP WITH HIM?
.....
THEY CAN'T EVEN KEEP UP A SCHEDULE ...?
.....

WE'LL JUST HAVE TO COME BACK SOME OTHER TIME TO ASK ABOUT--
EVEN AS MUCH AS I WANT TO KNOW IF IT'S HIM
WE CAN'T DO ANY-THING ELSE, TODAY
I GUESS WE'VE JUST GOT TO LEAVE FOR NOW
WHAT NOW IS RIGHT
SO WHAT NOW?
URGH
BLOOD ...?!

HUH ...?
BLOOD ...!
.....
THE MAN WHO GREETED US... HE'S GOT BLOOD ALL OVER HIS LEG...!!
URGH !!

CHAPTER 62 - FILTH
第62話 泥土

YASUOKA
!!
YASU-
OKA!!
HE...
HEY,
YOU!
WHOA-!
AKAGI!
WHERE DO
YOU THINK
YOU'RE
GOING?!
HEY!!

AKAGI!!!
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?!
WHA-?!
AH...!!
YASU-OKA--!!
YOU, THERE! STOP THAT, RIGHT THIS INSTANT!!

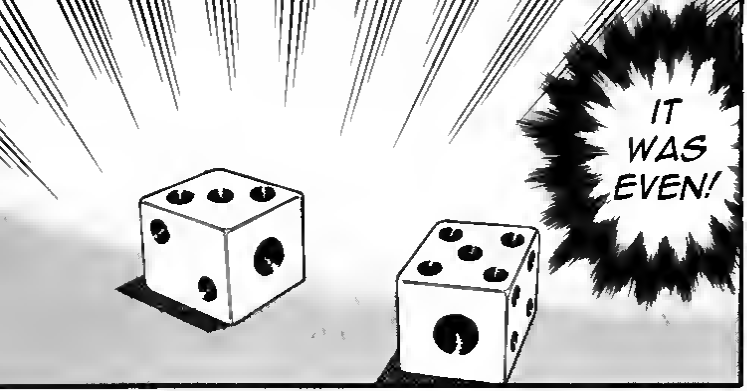
AKAGI
...!!

OHGI
WAIT!
GET HIM OUT OF HERE!!
OHGI TAKESHI.
THE INADA AND KURATA GROUPS ARE BOTH SUBSIDARIES OF THE SATOU GROUP AND HE IS THE UNDERBOSS OF INADA
YOU'RE OHGI-SAN, AREN'T YOU? IN THE BACK, THERE...
I'M OHGI INDEED.
LONG TIME NO SEE, KURAISHI.
INDEED IT IS.
ISN'T THAT RIGHT?
AND IN THAT REGARD
YOU'LL HAVE TO EXCUSE US FOR BARGING IN SO SUDDENLY...
.....

NEVER-THELESS
AH, IT'S QUITE ALL RIGHT
I APOLOGIZE FOR THIS, SINCERELY
HEH-HEH
WHAT'S ALL THIS ABOUT?
THERE IS SIMPLY NO WAY AROUND IT IN THIS CASE
AS I'M SURE YOU'RE WELL AWARE, WE HARDLY EVER NEED TO RESORT TO VIOLENCE OF THIS KIND, BUT...
IT SEEMS AS THOUGH YOU'VE CAUGHT US AT A RATHER BAD TIME.
AH, YES, ABOUT THAT
THE DICE USED FOR THE MATCH I'M REFER-RING TO SHOW EVEN.
AS YOU CAN SEE
I HAVE NO IDEA WHERE HE GOT ALL OF THAT, BUT I SUPPOSE IT DOESN'T MATTER...
IF YOU TAKE A LOOK AT HIS SACK OVER THERE, YOU'LL SEE IT'S A LARGE SUM OF MONEY.
EITHER WAY, IT'S REALLY BECOME A MESS.
YOU SEE, HE BET ALL THE MONEY HE HAD ON HAND
THIS MAN IS SIMPLY BEING STUBBORN!

WHA-?!
BUT YOU SEE, THIS MAN ...
... IS TRYING TO INSIST THAT THE DICE ARE ODD INSTEAD!
ISN'T THAT RIGHT, EVERYONE?!
HEH-HEH-HEH
IT IS!!
Y... YES!
SINCE YOU TWO WEREN'T HERE FROM THE START, LIKE WE WERE
DON'T BE SURPRISED IF THIS KID, HERE

...TRIES TO CONVINCE YOU THAT THE BET HE MADE WAS ON EVEN!
JUST TAKE IT WITH A GRAIN OF SALT, IF YOU WILL
HE'S LYING!
...BUT HE WOULD NEVER TRY TO WORM HIS WAY OUT OF A LOSS LIKE THIS!
EVEN IF IT HAPPENED
IT'S THE TRUTH THAT AKAGI IS A BONA FIDE SOCIAL OUTCAST
AND THAT HE TENDS TO IGNORE SOCIETAL RULES
...THAT HIS LIFE WERE TO DEPEND ON IT!
AKAGI'S BET WASN'T ODD AT ALL!


IT WAS EVEN!

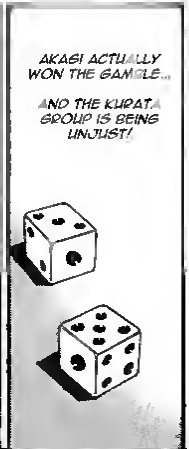
ARE THE KURATA GROUP...?
I'M POSITIVE THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED!

THE ONES WHO'RE TRYING TO TURN THE GAME AROUND TO THEIR FAVOR BY FORCE...
AKAGI IS THE ONE BEING HONEST!

KH...!

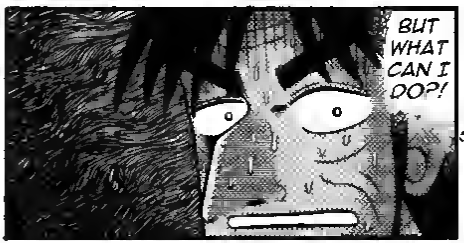
THEY CAN'T!
AT THIS RATE, THE KURATA GROUP WILL NEVER BACK DOWN FROM THEIR CLAIM ABOUT WHAT THE BET WAS

BUT...

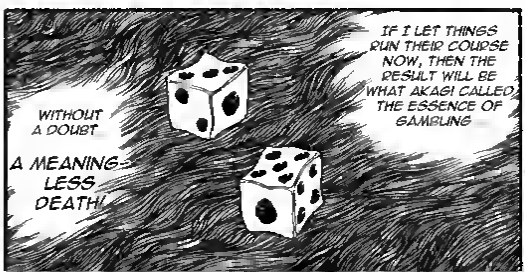

AKAGI ACTUALLY WON THE GAMBLE...
AND THE KURATA GROUP IS BEING UNJUST!

IT'S JUST THE WAY HE IS TO STAND STRONG UNTIL THE VERY END.
NEITHER WILL AKAGI!
BUT, ON THE OTHER HAND
THIS HAS GOTTEN TO A POINT WHERE THEY WILL NEVER BACK DOWN!

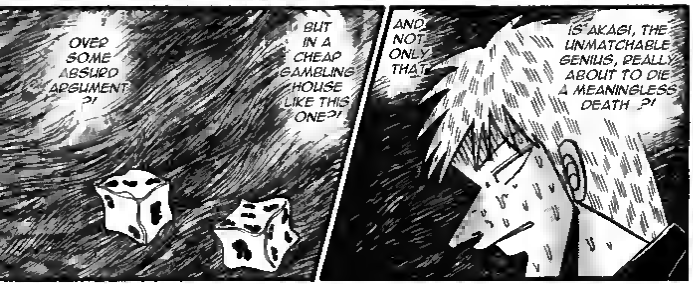
WE'LL WORK IT OUT BY OURSELVES, SO YOU DON'T NEED TO STAY.
THIS IS OUR PROBLEM TO DEAL WITH
SO, WITH THAT SAID
SO WHAT SHOULD I DO?!


BUT WHAT CAN I DO?!

I'VE GOT TO DO SOME-THING!
GH ...!!


IF I LET THINGS RUN THEIR COURSE NOW, THEN THE RESULT WILL BE WHAT AKAGI CALLED THE ESSENCE OF GAMBLING
WITHOUT A DOUBT
A MEANING-LESS DEATH!

DEATH ...?!


OVER SOME ABSURD ARGUMENT ?!
BUT IN A CHEAP GAMBLING HOUSE LIKE THIS ONE?!
AND NOT ONLY THAT
IS AKAGI, THE UNMATCHABLE GENIUS, REALLY ABOUT TO DIE A MEANINGLESS DEATH ?!

NO WAY!!

NO WAY!!
WILL HE VANISH OFF THE EARTH JUST LIKE THAT?!
IS IT POSSIBLE FOR HIM TO SINK AWAY JUST LIKE THAT?!

THERE'S JUST NO WAY!!

YASU-OKA ...!!
YAAAAAAAAAUUUUUUGGHHH!!
THE DICE ARE NO MORE!!
WHAT IS-?!

I CAN'T LET THAT HAP-PEN!!
GH ...!!
COME ON

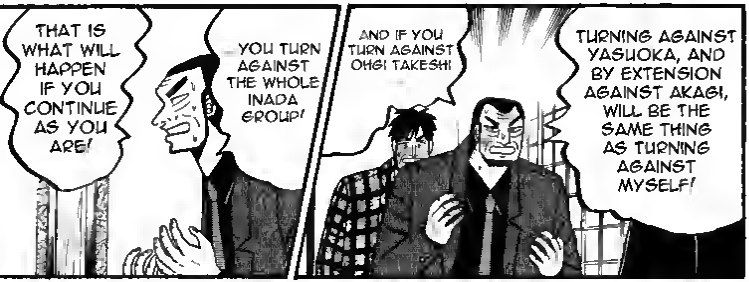
I WON'T ALLOW IT!!

AS IF I'D LET THAT HAP-PEN!!

THERE'S NO WAY TO TELL WHAT THEY WERE, NOW!
NO ONE CAN SAY IF THEY WERE EVEN OR ODD NOW!!
WHAT EVERYONE HERE WAS PUTTING THEIR LIVES AND PRIDE ON THE LINE FOR...

T/N: DAIGASHI: THE YAKUZA POSITION IN CHARGE OF A GAMBLING HOUSE, WORKING FOR THE BOSS DIRECTLY.

YASUOKA IS MY COMRADE ..
I CAN'T JUST STAND IDLY BY!
THAT IS NOT TRUE!
YOU CALM DOWN!!
YOU'RE NOT PART OF THIS!
OHGI-SAN ...?!
PLEASE CALM DOWN, SIR!

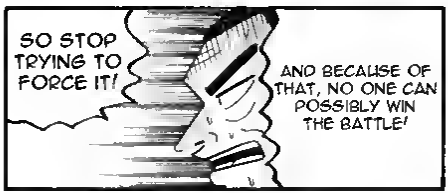

THAT IS WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF YOU CONTINUE AS YOU ARE!
... YOU TURN AGAINST THE WHOLE INADA GROUP!
AND IF YOU TURN AGAINST OHGI TAKESHI
TURNING AGAINST YASUOKA, AND BY EXTENSION AGAINST AKAGI, WILL BE THE SAME THING AS TURNING AGAINST MYSELF!

AS THAT VERY SAME OHGI OF THE INADA GROUP, I STAND HERE AND BOW MY HEAD TO YOU!
DAI-GASH!!
OHGI ...!

WHA...
WHAT A STUPID THING TO SAY!!
...AND GO BACK TO THE WAY THINGS WERE BEFORE THIS MESS STARTED?!

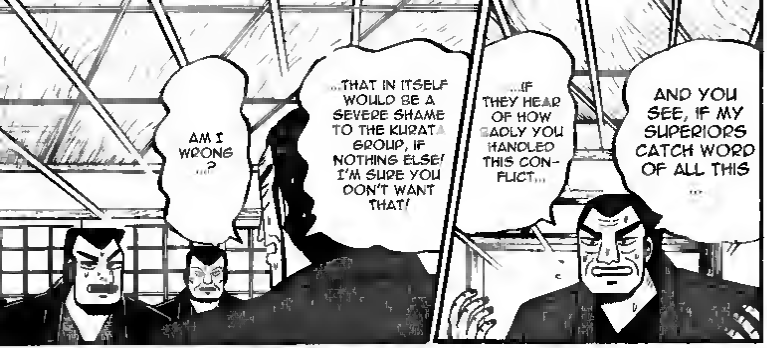
SO CAN WE NOT ACT AS THOUGH IT NEVER HAPPENED
THIS BATTLE CAN GO NOWHERE, NOW...

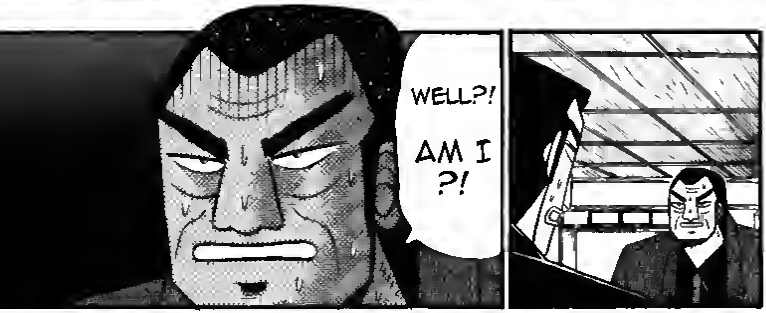
YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO!
YOU KNOW FULL WELL THAT WE CAN'T DO THAT!!!

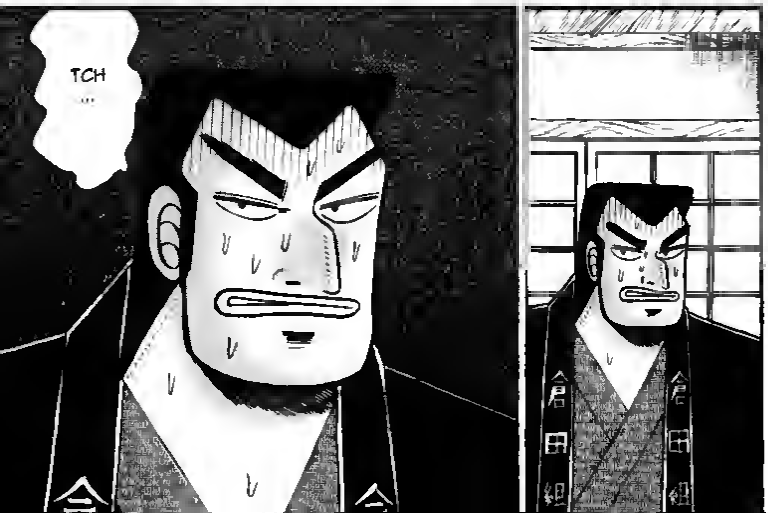

SO STOP TRYING TO FORCE IT!
AND BECAUSE OF THAT, NO ONE CAN POSSIBLY WIN THE BATTLE!

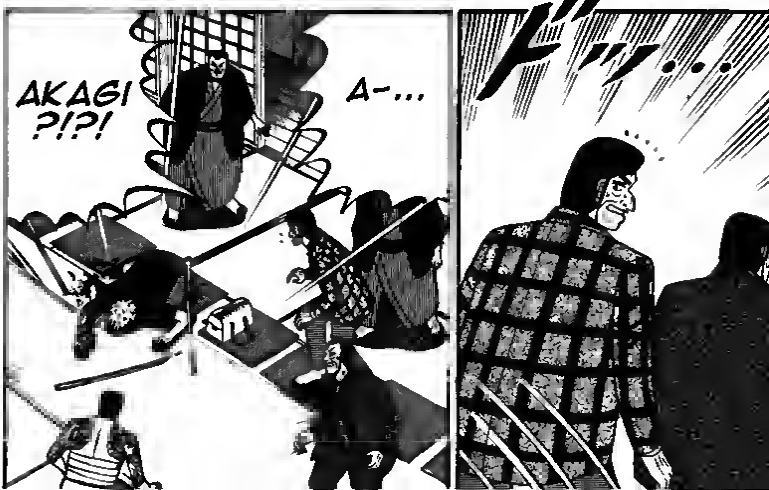
...BUT NO ONE CAN DEFINITIVELY PROVE WHAT THE OUT-COME WAS!
THE DICE'S ROLL HAS BEEN KNOCKED AWAY, SO ARGUE ALL YOU LIKE

...I WILL HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO REPORT IT TO MY SU-PERIORS!
IF YOU INSIST ON CONTINUING TO FIGHT THIS BATTLE LOCKED IN A PERMANENT STALEMATE


AND YOU SEE, IF MY SUPERIORS CATCH WORD OF ALL THIS ...
...IF THEY HEAR OF HOW BADLY YOU HANDLED THIS CONFLICT...
...THAT IN ITSELF WOULD BE A SEVERE SHAME TO THE KURATA GROUP, IF NOTHING ELSE! I'M SURE YOU DON'T WANT THAT!
AM I WRONG ...?

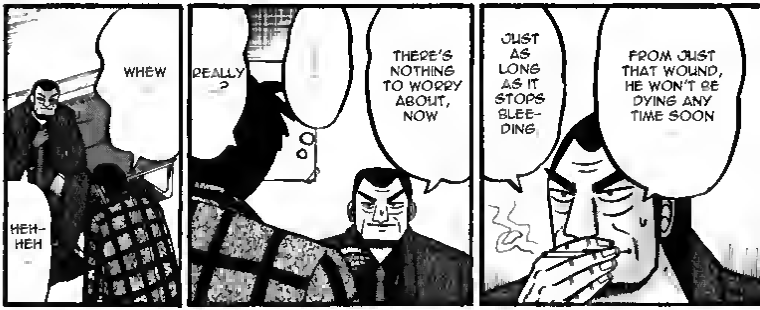

WELL?! AM I ?!


TCH ...


AKAGI ?!?!
A-...
ドッ...

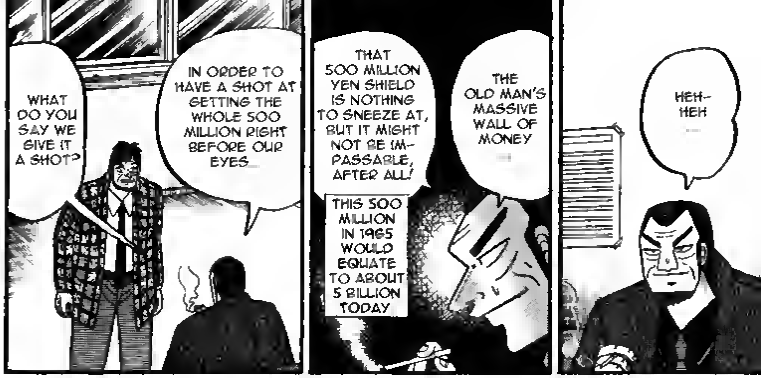
AKAGI!!!!!
HEH-HEH
HOW WAS HE ...?!
HOW

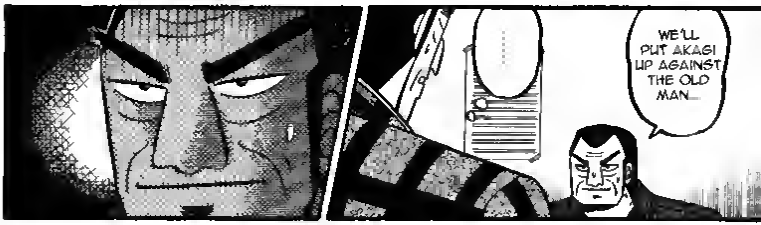
NO PROBLEMS AT ALL

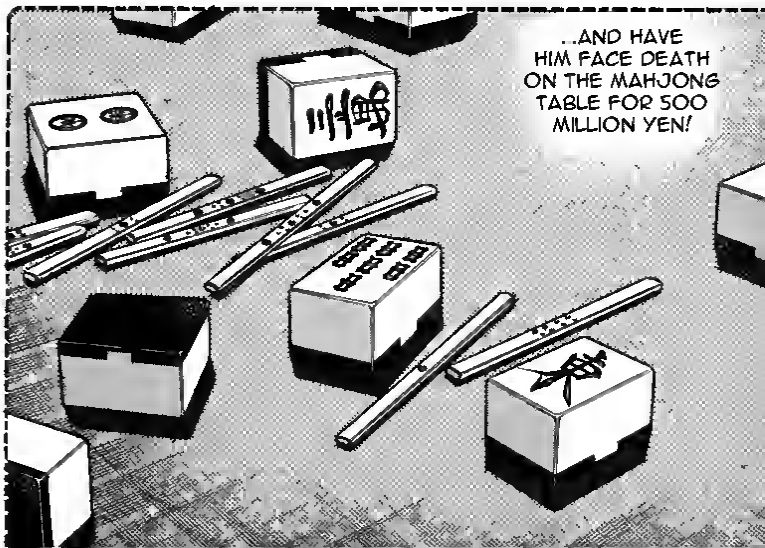

WHEW
HEH-HEH
REALLY?
THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT, NOW
JUST AS LONG AS IT STOPS BLEEDING
FROM JUST THAT WOUND, HE WON'T BE DYING ANY TIME SOON

I GUESS NO ONE EVER TAUGHT HIM WHEN TO PUT ON THE BRAKES.
IF WE HADN'T SHOWN UP RIGHT WHEN WE DID, HE REALLY WOULD HAVE DIED IN THAT FILTHY PLACE.
THAT SURE WAS A CLOSE CALL, THOUGH

YOU WERE RIGHT ABOUT HIM, BEFORE
THAT MAN IS NOT AT ALL AFRAID OF DEATH
I'M STARTING TO SEE IT, NOW
IF IT'S AKAGI, THE OLD MAN MIGHT NOT BE TOTALLY UNBEATABLE, AFTER ALL!
INSTEAD OF LOOKING FOR CHEAP SHOTS OF ADRENALINE
FROM COMING IN A CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH DEATH
...HE ACTUALLY LOOKS DEATH STRAIGHT IN THE EYES, WITHOUT FLINCHING!
THAT TYPE OF MAN ...
...IS REALLY SOME-THING SPECIAL
HE'S AN IRREPLACABLE TALENT
AND BE-CAUSE OF THAT ...
DON'T YOU AGREE?
OHGI
...I JUST COULDN'T LET HIM DIE LIKE THAT!

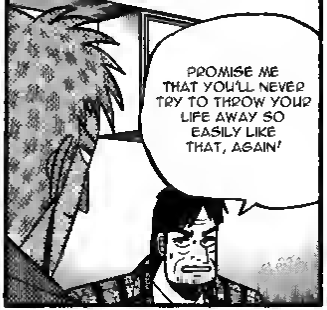

WHAT DO YOU SAY WE GIVE IT A SHOT?
IN ORDER TO HAVE A SHOT AT GETTING THE WHOLE 500 MILLION RIGHT BEFORE OUR EYES...
THAT 500 MILLION YEN SHIELD IS NOTHING TO SNEEZE AT, BUT IT MIGHT NOT BE IMPASSABLE, AFTER ALL!
THIS 500 MILLION IN 1965 WOULD EQUATE TO ABOUT 5 BILLION TODAY
THE OLD MAN'S MASSIVE WALL OF MONEY
HEH-HEH


WE'LL PUT AKAGI UP AGAINST THE OLD MAN...

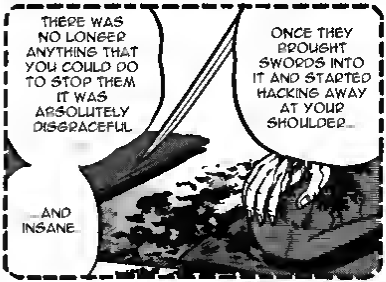

...AND HAVE HIM FACE DEATH ON THE MAHJONG TABLE FOR 500 MILLION YEN!

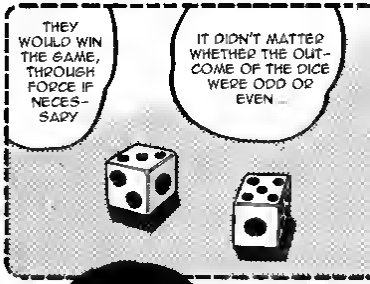
CHAPTER 63 - MEANINGLESS
第63話 犬死

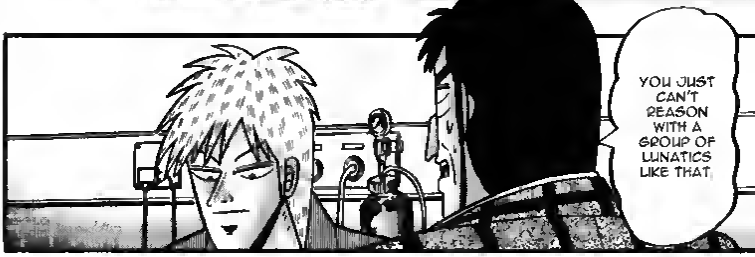
HAH-HAH
IT'S REALLY LUCKY THAT WASN'T A VERY SERIOUS INJURY YOU GOT, THERE
YOU KNOW
YOU CAN MOVE YOUR HAND, NOW, CAN'T YOU?
I HEARD THAT NONE OF YOUR NERVES WERE SEVERED.


PROMISE ME THAT YOU'LL NEVER TRY TO THROW YOUR LIFE AWAY SO EASILY LIKE THAT, AGAIN!

MAKE ME A PROMISE, HERE
EVEN SO, THOUGH...

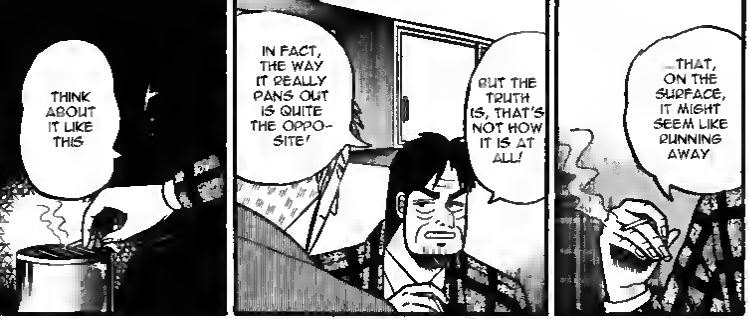

THERE WAS NO LONGER ANYTHING THAT YOU COULD DO TO STOP THEM IT WAS ABSOLUTELY DISGRACEFUL
ONCE THEY BROUGHT SWORDS INTO IT AND STARTED HACKING AWAY AT YOUR SHOULDER...
...AND INSANE...


THEY WOULD WIN THE GAME, THROUGH FORCE IF NECESSARY
IT DIDN'T MATTER WHETHER THE OUTCOME OF THE DICE WERE ODD OR EVEN...

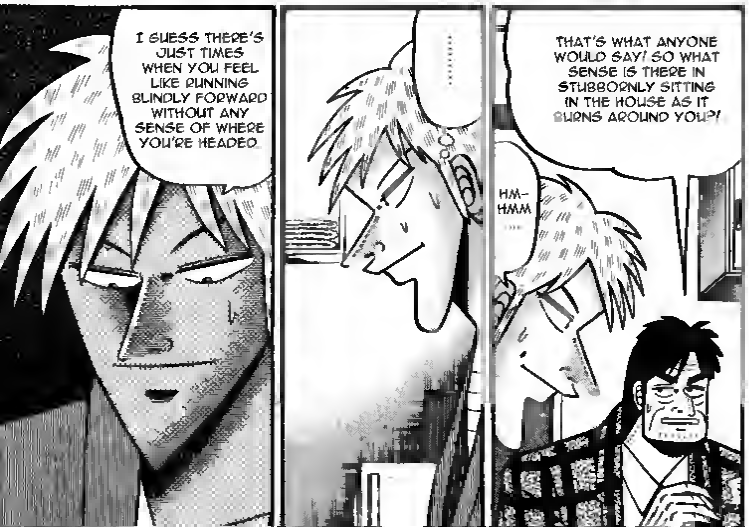

YOU JUST CAN'T REASON WITH A GROUP OF LUNATICS LIKE THAT.

ALTHOUGH, I SUPPOSE I CAN UNDERSTAND...
THAT WOULD SEEM TO ME LIKE COMMON SENSE

NO MATTER WHAT YOU TRY TO DO, YOU WILL STILL FAIL
AGAINST SUCH A LARGE GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO WOULD STOP AT NOTHING TO GET WHAT THEY WANT.

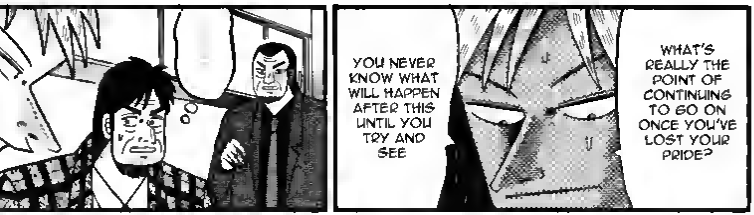

THINK ABOUT IT LIKE THIS
IN FACT, THE WAY IT REALLY PANS OUT IS QUITE THE OPPO-SITE!
BUT THE TRUTH IS, THAT'S NOT HOW IT IS AT ALL!
...THAT, ON THE SURFACE, IT MIGHT SEEM LIKE RUNNING AWAY

IF YOUR HOUSE IS BURNING TO THE GROUND
...YOU HAVE TO GET OUT OF IT!
...YOU HAVE TO GET AWAY FROM IT!
IF YOU DON'T WANT TO GET BITTEN BY A RABID DOG

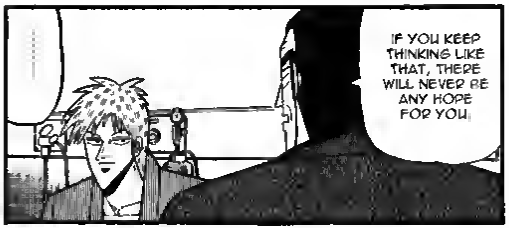

I GUESS THERE'S JUST TIMES WHEN YOU FEEL LIKE RUNNING BLINDLY FORWARD WITHOUT ANY SENSE OF WHERE YOU'RE HEADED.
.....
THAT'S WHAT ANYONE WOULD SAY! SO WHAT SENSE IS THERE IN STUBBORNLY SITTING IN THE HOUSE AS IT BURNS AROUND YOU?!
HM-HMM

THAT'S THE KIND OF FEELING THAT I HAD BACK THEN
THE MORE BLOOD POURED OUT OF MY BODY
THE MORE SURE I FELT THAT I COULDN'T COMPRO-MISE
AND ONCE I'D GOTTEN TO THAT POINT...
I FELT LIKE I COULD DIE WITH MY PRIDE ...
...AND BE SATISFIED WITH THAT.
I SUP-POSE
IT WAS PRETTY STUPID TO JUST SIT UNMOVING AND FEEL THE HOUSE BURN DOWN AROUND ME
IT'S EASY TO SEE THAT MUCH NOW THAT WE'RE QUIETLY RECOLLECTING ON WHAT HAPPENED

THOSE WERE JUST EMPTY WORDS
AKAGI
...THAT'S AS FAR AS I AGREE WITH WHAT YOU SAID, YASUOKA-SAN
BUT THE FACT OF THE MATTER IS...


YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT WILL HAPPEN AFTER THIS UNTIL YOU TRY AND SEE
WHAT'S REALLY THE POINT OF CONTINUING TO GO ON ONCE YOU'VE LOST YOUR PRIDE?

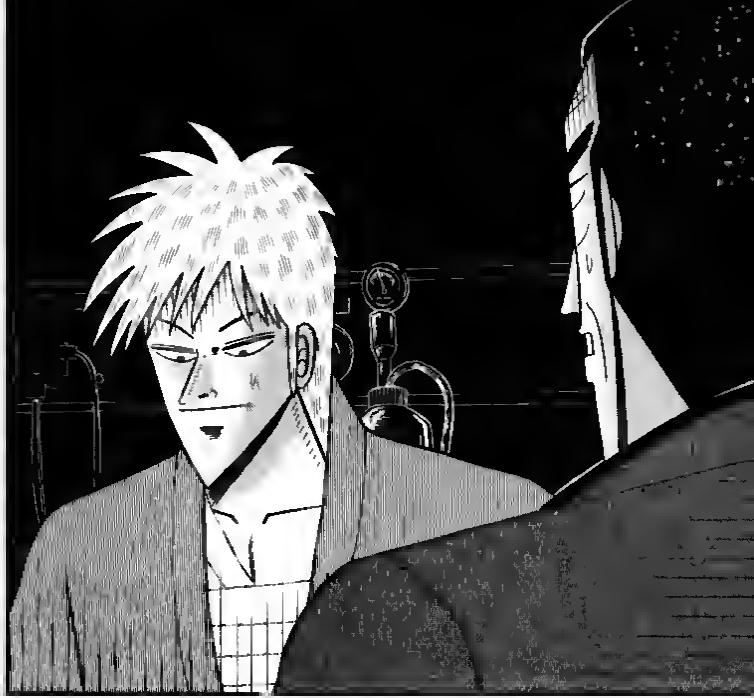
...IT'S FINE TO JUST LAY DOWN AND DIE.
IT DOESN'T MATTER WHO THE ONE TAKING YOUR LIFE IS...
ALL I'M SAYING IS THAT, WHEN THE TIME COMES TO DIE, IT'S FINE TO LET GO OF RATIONALITY.
YOU'RE WRONG!
IF YOU FEEL LIKE YOUR TIME OF DEATH IS ABOUT TO COME TO PASS...


IF YOU KEEP THINKING LIKE THAT, THERE WILL NEVER BE ANY HOPE FOR YOU.

YOU CAN GET FURTHER IN LIFE THAN YOU MIGHT THINK JUST BY CONTINUING TO LIVE!

YOU'RE LIKE A CRAZY FIREWORK, GOING THIS WAY AND THAT, SENDING SPARKS STREAMING ALL OVER THE SKY.
BUT, IN THE END, YOU JUST FIZZLE OUT IN THE AIR

A THIRD-RATE WAY TO LIVE
...
...A LIFE LED BY NOTHING BUT YOUR GIVEN TALENT!
THAT WOULD BE YOUR ENTIRE LIFE...
MAKE MORE OF YOURSELF, AKAGI!
WHY DON'T YOU USE THAT TALENT TO BUILD MORE?
YOU CAN HAVE THE WORLD AS YOUR DOMAIN!
YOU CAN REALLY CONQUER THE WORLD!
IF YOU USE THAT TALENT AS THE FOUNDATION AND BUILD ON TOP OF IT...

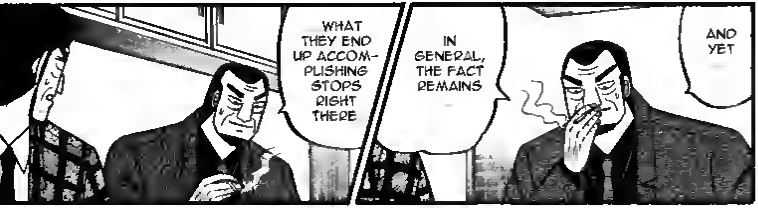


HEH-HEH

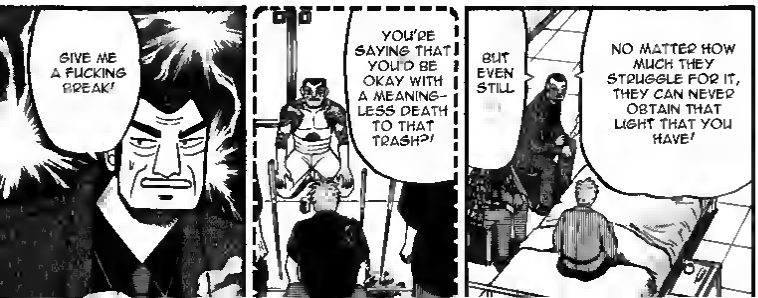
NOW, NOW, DON'T SAY THAT!

NOT INTERESTED

THEIR DEAREST WISH, IF YOU WILL.
THAT'S EVERYBODY'S ULTIMATE ASPIRATION THEIR GREATEST HOPE
IS LOOKING TO PUSH THEMSELVES UP HIGHER
EVERYONE IN THIS WORLD OF OURS

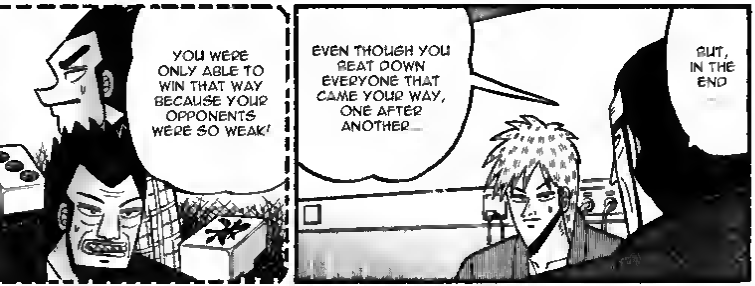

WHAT THEY END UP ACCOM-PLISHING STOPS RIGHT THERE
IN GENERAL, THE FACT REMAINS
AND YET

YOU HAVE A GLOW ABOUT YOU THAT THEY CAN NEVER HOPE TO GAIN FOR THEMSELVES
WHEN IT COMES TO THAT, YOU REALLY STAND ABOVE ALL THE REST.
THEY ARE SHUT OFF FROM EVER REACHING THEIR GOAL


GIVE ME A FUCKING BREAK!
YOU'RE SAYING THAT YOU'D BE OKAY WITH A MEANING-LESS DEATH TO THAT TRASH?!
BUT EVEN STILL
NO MATTER HOW MUCH THEY STRUGGLE FOR IT, THEY CAN NEVER OBTAIN THAT LIGHT THAT YOU HAVE!

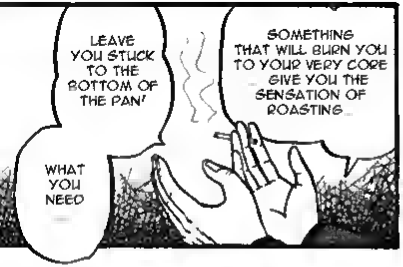
YOU COMPLETELY IGNORED THE FACT TH T YOU MEANT NOTHING TO THEM!
WHAT YOU DID WAS NOT ONLY STUPID, BUT EXTREMELY ARROGANT!
.....
THAT DOESN'T FIT YOU IN THE LEAST!
BUT WHAT YOU DID...
IT'S ABSOLUTELY FINE TO CURSE THE GROUP UNDER YOUR BREATH!
BUT IN REALITY, THAT'S NOT HOW IT IS IN THE LEAST!
YOU MAY HAVE FELT LIKE YOU WERE THAT CALLOUS SINCE THEY FIRST MET YOU...
YOU MORONICALLY FOUGHT TO THE DEATH FOR YOUR MONEY!
...WAS ACT AS THOUGH YOU WERE EQUAL TO THEM!
IT'S JUST THAT YOU OPERATE WITH NOTHING BUT THAT TALENT!
THAT IS PART OF YOUR TALENT!
AND THE FACT OF THE MATTER IS...
YOU PUT ON A DISPLAY OF BEING EITHER CALM OR ARROGANT AS THE NEED AROSE...
THOSE ACTIONS AREN'T JUST PART OF BEING AN INEXPERIENCED YOUTH. THOUGH THEY CERTAINLY THOUGHT SO...
A SORT OF MASK

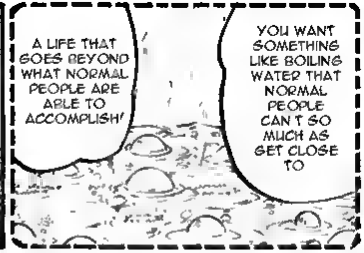
...YOU'VE MANAGED TO WIN EVERY GAMBLE YOU'VE TAKEN PART IN.
AND WITH JUST THAT TALENT ALONE...


YOU WERE ONLY ABLE TO WIN THAT WAY BECAUSE YOUR OPPONENTS WERE SO WEAK!
EVEN THOUGH YOU BEAT DOWN EVERYONE THAT CAME YOUR WAY, ONE AFTER ANOTHER...
BUT, IN THE END...

ANY KIND OF MEANINGLESS DEATH WOULD BE FINE BY YOU IS WHAT YOU SAY... BUT IF IT WEREN'T FOR THOSE EASY OPPONENTS, YOU WOULDN'T HAVE THAT MINDSET!
I'D HAZARD A GUESS...
THAT IS WHY YOU HAVE GROWN SO BORED WITH LIFE!
TO PUT IT ANOTHER WAY, YOU WERE ONLY PLAYING AGAINST EASY OPPONENTS TO BEAT THIS WHOLE TIME.
AND THUS...

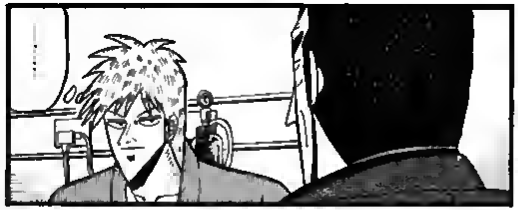
...THAT YOU FELT AS THOUGH YOU WERE IN LUKEWARM WATER.


LEAVE YOU STUCK TO THE BOTTOM OF THE PAN!
SOMETHING THAT WILL BURN YOU TO YOUR VERY CORE GIVE YOU THE SENSATION OF ROASTING...
WHAT YOU NEED


A LIFE THAT GOES BEYOND WHAT NORMAL PEOPLE ARE ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH!
YOU WANT SOMETHING LIKE BOILING WATER THAT NORMAL PEOPLE CAN'T SO MUCH AS GET CLOSE TO

AKAGI

...IS A WORTHY OPPO-NENT!

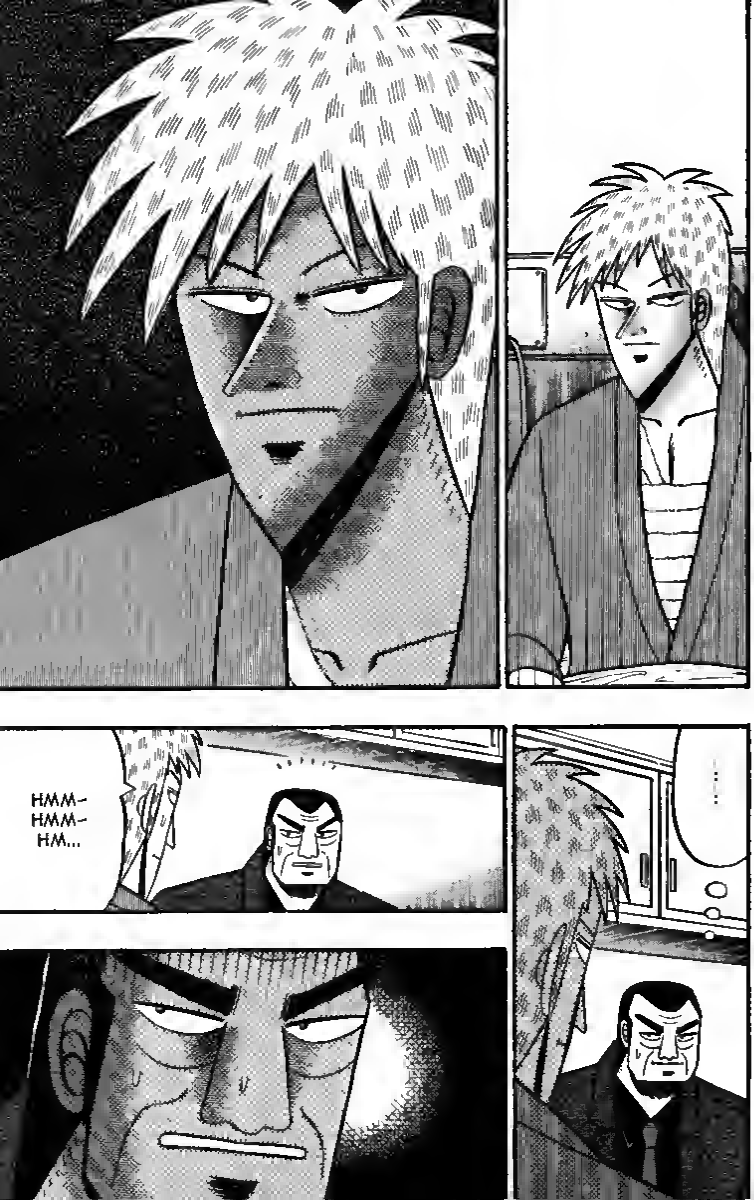


ISN'T JUST TO LAY DOWN AND DIE
DEEP DOWN BENEATH THE SURFACE, WHAT YOU WANT...

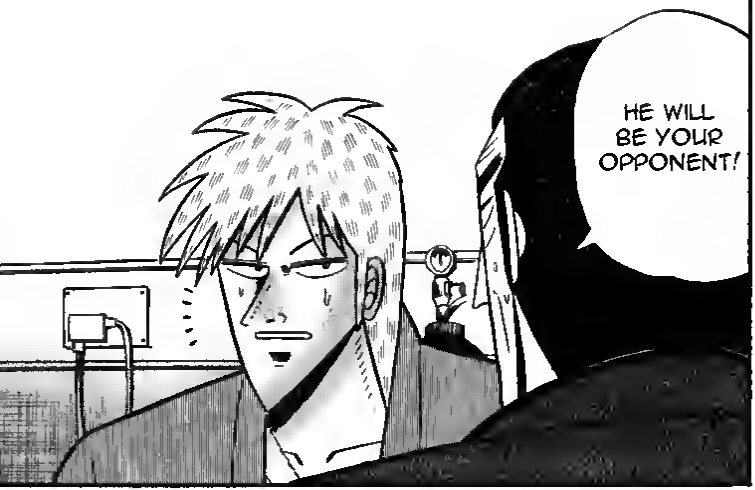
HEH-HEH...

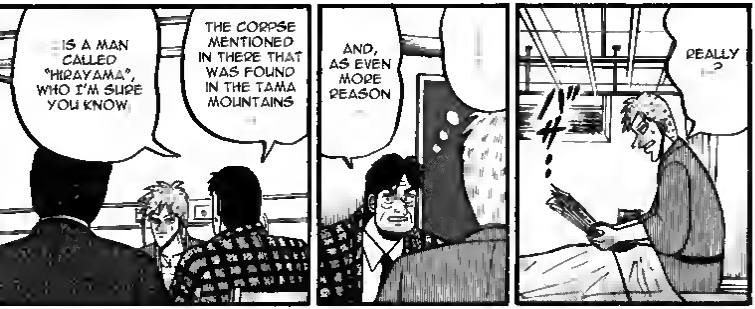
THAT IS, THAT EVERYTHING UP TO THIS POINT HAS BEEN FAR TOO DULL FOR YOU!

I KNOW SOMEONE WHO CAN GIVE YOU THE THRILL YOU'RE AFTER!

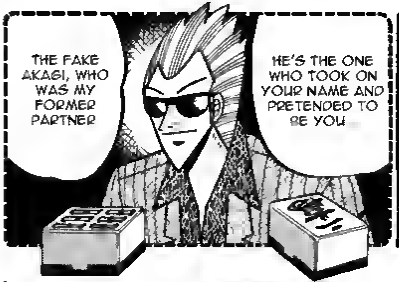

HMM-
HMM-
HM...

SURE
LET HIM SEE IT.
THERE ARE THESE FREAKISH MURDERS THAT ARE HAPPENING AND HAVE BEEN POSTED ALL OVER THE PRESS AS OF LATE.
THE PERPE-TRATOR OF THESE MURDERS ...
...IS THE MAN I WAS REFERRING TO.
?.....

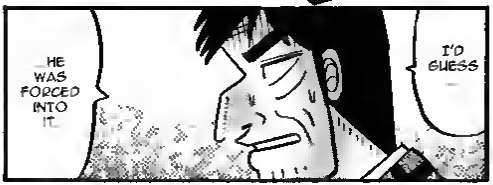

HE WILL BE YOUR OPPONENT!

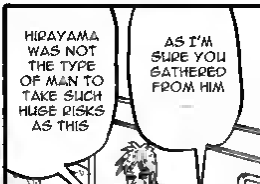

...IS A MAN CALLED "HIRAYAMA", WHO I'M SURE YOU KNOW.
THE CORPSE MENTIONED IN THERE THAT WAS FOUND IN THE TAMA MOUNTAINS
AND, AS EVEN MORE REASON
REALLY...?

THIS IS HIM.
I DON'T KNOW IF IT MEANS ANYTHING TO YOU, BUT...


THE FAKE AKAGI, WHO WAS MY FORMER PARTNER
HE'S THE ONE WHO TOOK ON YOUR NAME AND PRETENDED TO BE YOU

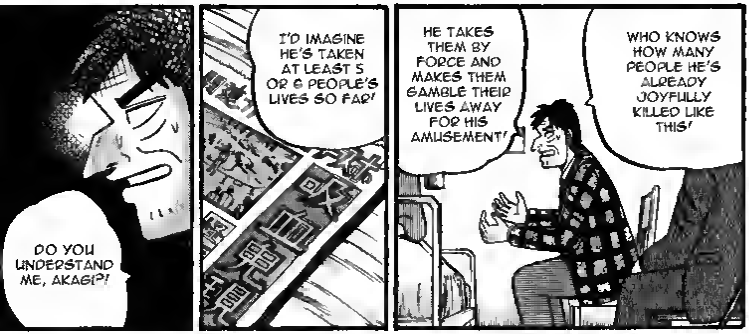
THAT'S RIGHT
THIS IS... HE WAS...


...HE WAS FORCED INTO IT...
I'D GUESS...


HIRAYAMA WAS NOT THE TYPE OF MAN TO TAKE SUCH HUGE RISKS AS THIS
AS I'M SURE YOU GATHERED FROM HIM...

THE RESULT... WAS THIS WHOLE MESS
MADE HIM BET IT IN A HIGH-STAKES GAME OF MAHJONG
THE MURDERER WHO TOOK HIS LIFE...

IT'S NOT JUST HIRAYAMA
HUNT HIM DOWN!
...AKAGI!


DO YOU UNDERSTAND ME, AKAGI?!
I'D IMAGINE HE'S TAKEN AT LEAST 5 OR 6 PEOPLE'S LIVES SO FAR!
HE TAKES THEM BY FORCE AND MAKES THEM GAMBLE THEIR LIVES AWAY FOR HIS AMUSEMENT!
WHO KNOWS HOW MANY PEOPLE HE'S ALREADY JOYFULLY KILLED LIKE THIS!

YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN!
PUT A STOP TO THIS MONSTER ONCE AND FOR ALL, AKAGI!!
YOU ARE AIMING TO TAKE DOWN THIS MAN-EATING TIGER WHO IS ON THE LOOSE!
THIS TIME AROUND, IT'S NOT JUST A MATTER OF MONEY!
THIS IS A HUNT!

若者失踪事件と関連か!?
吸血鬼現わる
アカギ7／完
AKAGI 7 -FIN-

近代麻雀コミックス
アカギ⑦
1997年8月10日初版発行

著　者●福本伸行 ©NOBUYUKI FUKUMOTO
発行者●高橋一平
発行所●㈱竹書房
東京都千代田区飯田橋2－7－3
電話　03(3264)1576
振替　00170-2-179210
印刷所●暁印刷株式会社

乱丁・落丁本はおとりかえいたします。
定価はカバーに表示してあります。
TAKE SHOBO　Printed in Japan